

# PC PowerPlay

PC GAMES & TECHNOLOGY.  
100% AUSTRALIAN

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!

## AGE OF EMPIRES II

KNIGHTS OF GREAT GAMING!

next  
gaming



ISSUE 42 NOVEMBER 1999  
\$8.95 NZ \$12.95 inc. GST

TECH

**KILLER  
GRAPHICS**

NVIDIA GeForce 256  
S3 SAVAGE 2000



**IN DEPTH  
PREVIEWS**

Tribes 2  
Rally 2000  
Battlezone 2  
Team Fortress 2

FEATURE **GREATEST  
STRATEGY  
GAMES  
OF ALL TIME**

**REVIEWED**

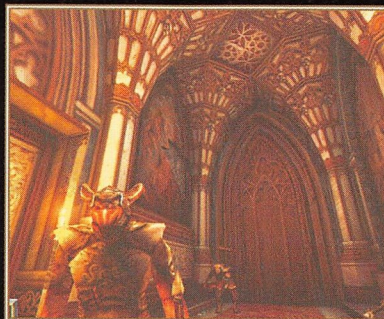
Force 21  
Braveheart  
System Shock 2  
Jagged Alliance 2  
**+MORE!**



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LOVE  
thyself.

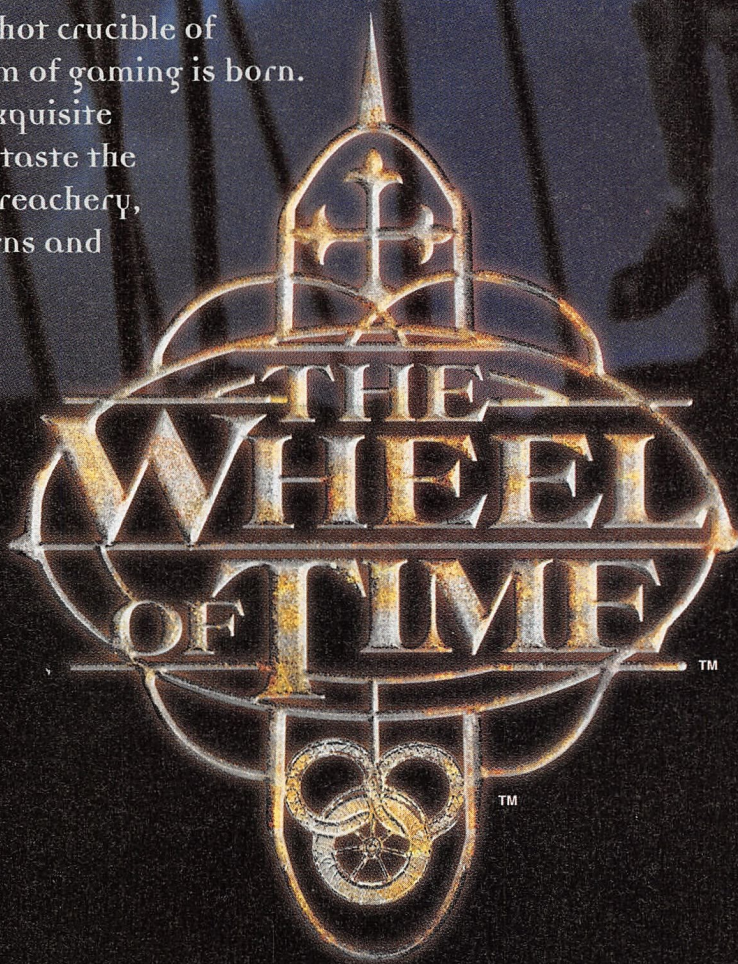
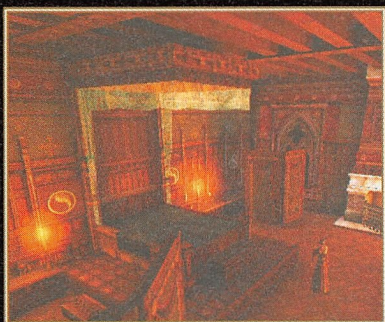
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environments ever seen and taste the  
forbidden fruits of sorcery, treachery,  
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artifacts of absolute power.

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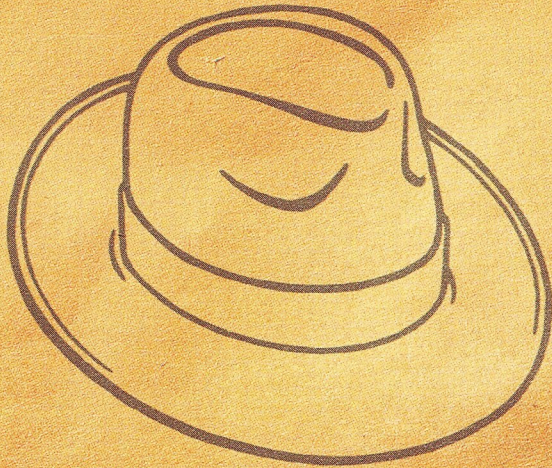
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# HOW TO BREAK IN A FEDORA:



1 Make sure each side of the crown has a smooth, curved indent.

2 For a look that says you've got places to go and bad guys to hurt, give the brim a nice, even crease.

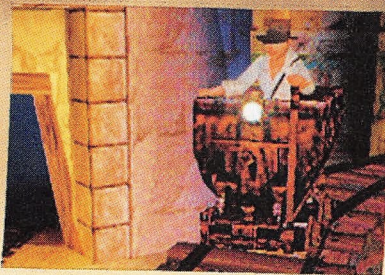


## EXPERT METHODS:

3 Canine chew toy.



4 Mine shaft wind shear.



5 High altitude bridge-hopping.



From the mountains of Kazakhstan to the ruins of the Olmecs. It's 17 chapters



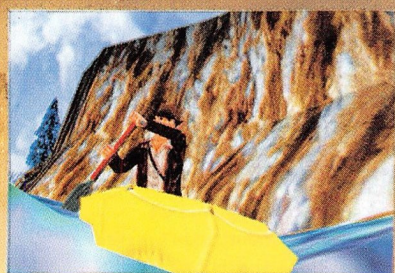
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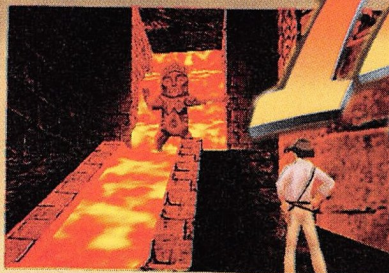
- ③ Never, under any circumstances, turn the brim up. Remember, you want to look like a stud archaeologist, not some guy named Cletus.

- ⑦ Raging H<sub>2</sub>O soaks.



of epic, blood-pumping adventure — and the hat never falls off. Indy's back.

- ⑧ Lava vapor treatments.



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# PC PowerPlay

## CONTENTS

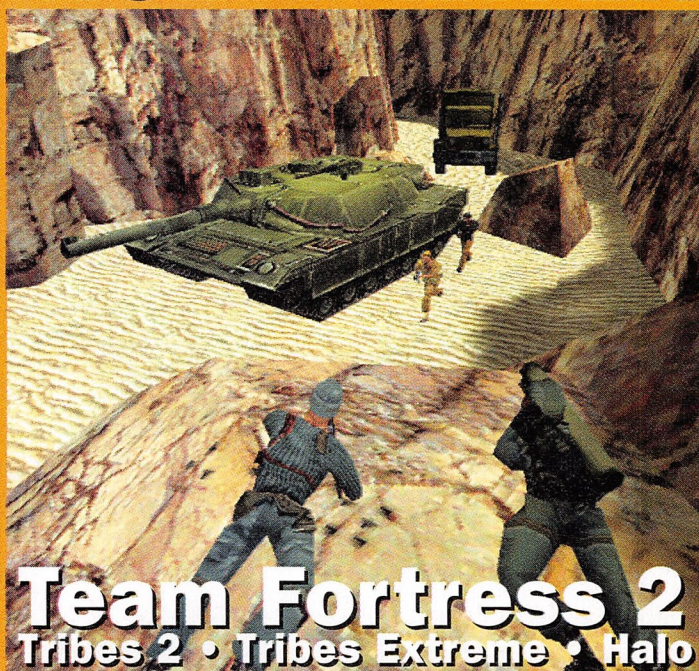
ISSUE 42 SEPTEMBER 1999

# 26 STRATEGY GAMING



Retired military general Brett Robinson examines the venerable history of the strategy game and scans the radar to see what might be coming next.

# 36 MASS MULTIPLAYER



**Team Fortress 2**  
Tribes 2 • Tribes Extreme • Halo



### 9 Editorial

The Mansill Decree: a word to the wise, kids, so sit up straight and pay attention.

### 10 CD Guide

Harry writes all this stuff and we love him dearly for it.

### 14 News

Through the looking glass with American McGee; drive a car for 24hrs straight; those lovable Lemmings are back; and so might be Wolfenstein 3D.

### 20 Spotlight

Colin McRae Rally 2 takes centre-stage this month, with Slave Zero, Force Commander and - of all things - South Park Rally providing the chorus line.

## PREVIEWS

- 44 Battlezone 2
- 46 Rally Championship 2000
- 48 Interstate '82
- 50 The Nomad Soul

### 52 The Score List

### 55 Review Contents

### 84 Retroversion

Still skulking in the shadows, March tells us why Thief: The Dark Project was a defining moment for gaming.

### 86 Diversions

Tonka Raceway  
Tonka Garage  
Tattoo Studio  
Case Closed

### 88 GAMEPLAY

The Oracle  
Code  
Tips & Tactics

### 92 Everquest Guide

With Prumpy comatose under the bar at the Gonad & Goblin, it was left to Murray Philbrick to pack the adventurer's kit.

## TECH

### 100 Tech News

Hugh Norton-Smith puts the latest AMD and Intel chips under the microscope.

### 104 Hotware

NVIDIA's GeForce 256 and the S3 Savage 2000

### 108 Setup

Computer counselling with Dr Ashton Mills.

## ONLINE

### 112 Net Game News

How does Tiberian Sun fare online? What happened to the System Shock 2 co-op mode? We have the answers.

### 122 Web Stalk

There are one billion web pages on the internet - here are five of them.

### 124 Letters

Yes! Another chance for us to print a screenshot of Ultima: Ascension. Yay!

### 128 Competitions

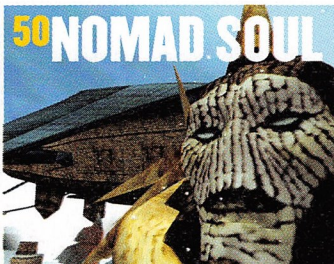
Win some games and stuff for knowing the most incredibly pointless facts.

### 129 Next Month

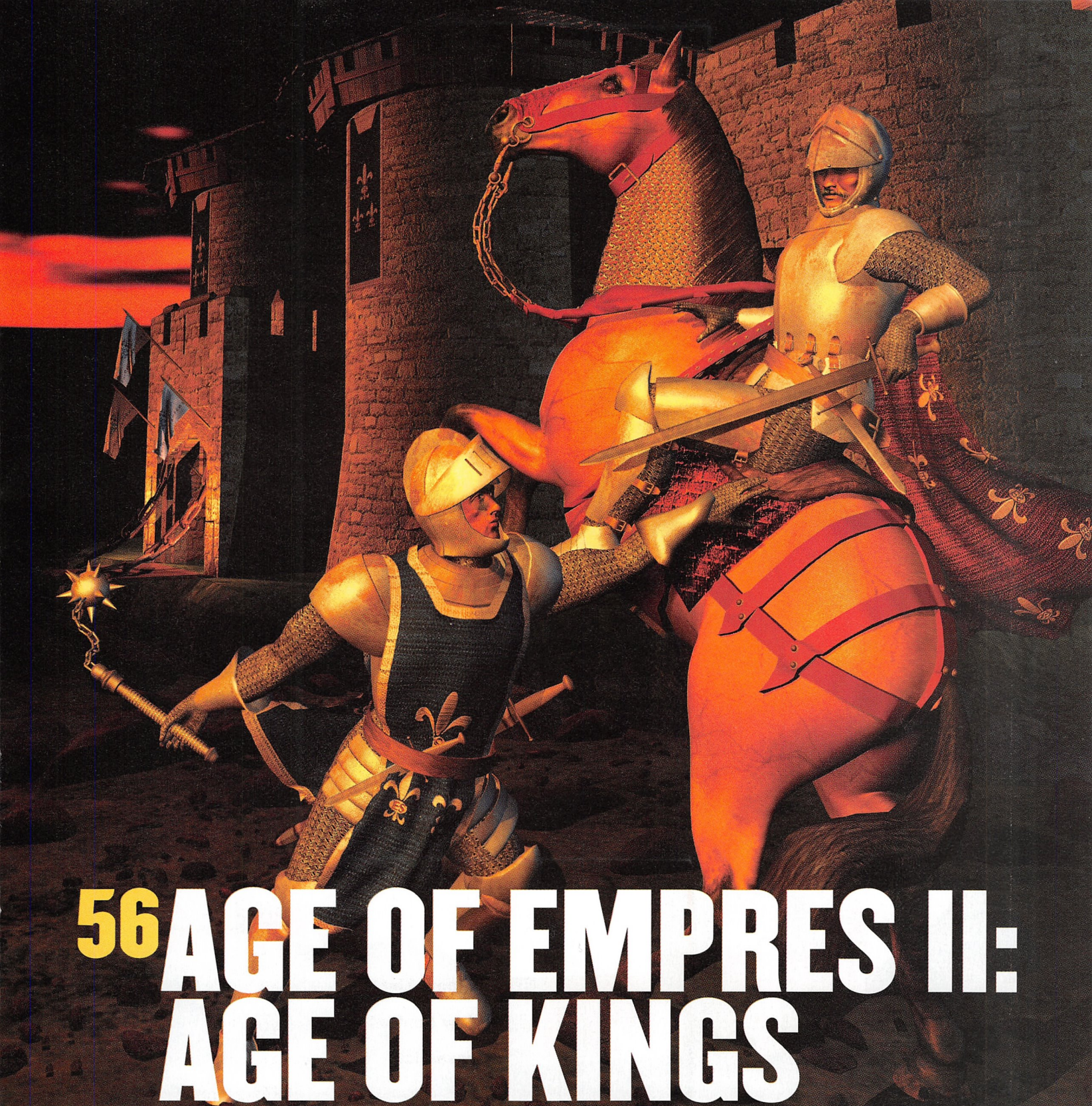
Okay, so four of the games we mentioned last month didn't make it for review this issue, but we'll get it right this time. Maybe.

### 130 Read Error

The PCPP crew go shooting on location this month. Oh dear...



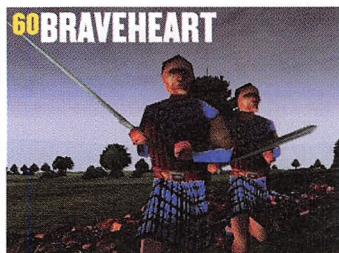




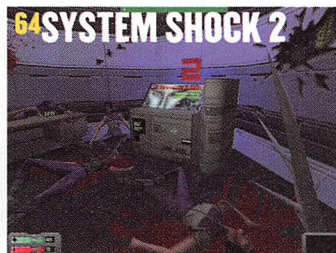
# 56 AGE OF EMPRES II: AGE OF KINGS

## ISSUE 42 REVIEWS

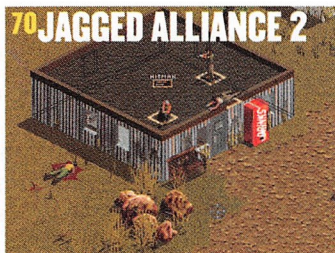
**56** Age Of Empires 2  
**60** Braveheart  
**64** System Shock 2  
**68** Darkstone



**70** Jagged Alliance  
**72** Force 21  
**74** The Operational Art  
Of War 2



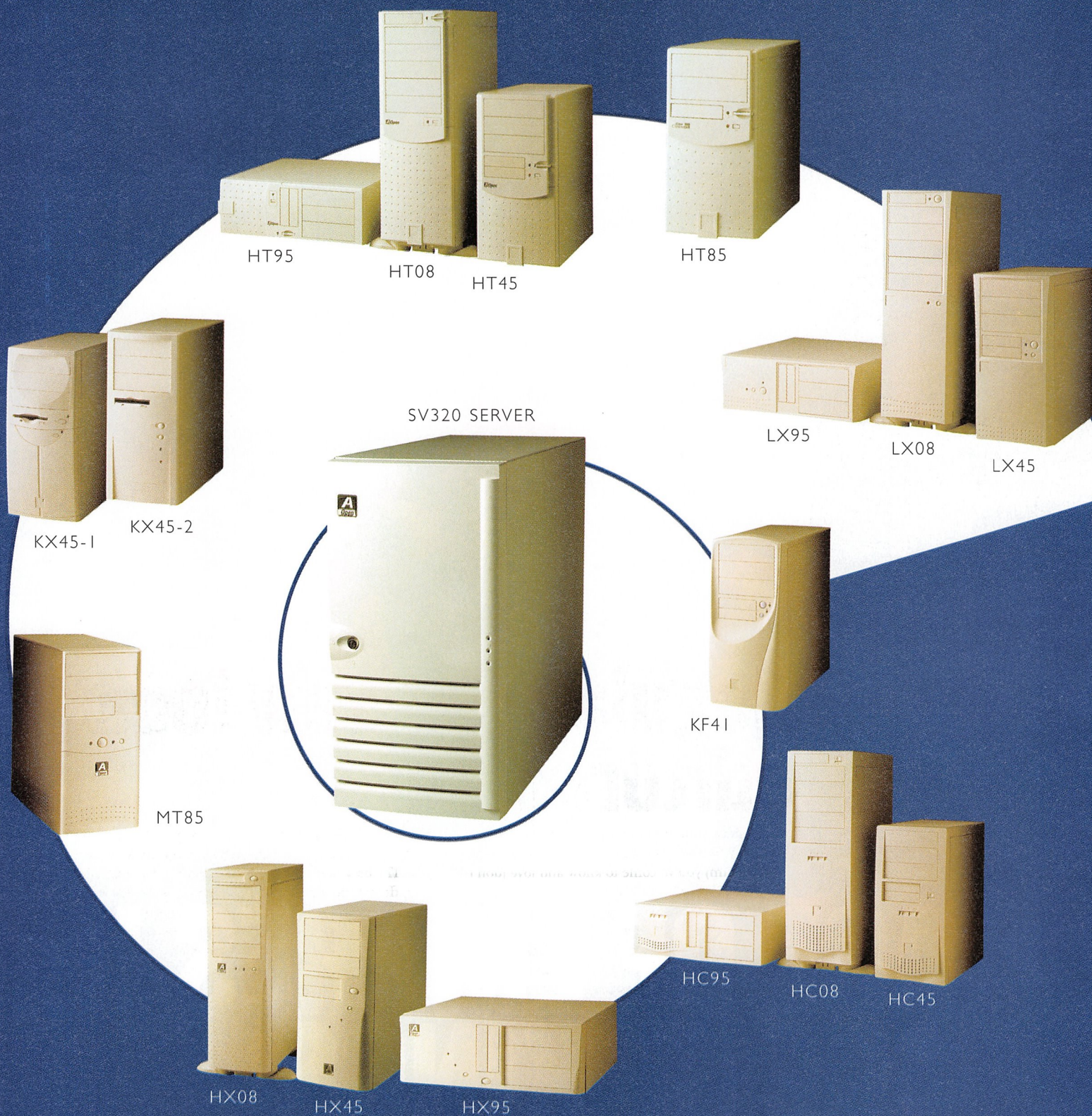
**76** MiG Alley  
**77** Castrol Honda  
Superbikes 2000  
**78** Clans



**80** FA Premier League Stars  
**81** Skydive!  
**82** Amerzone  
**83** Fly!







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What we're playing:

Ben: TOCA2, Age of Empires II, Tiberian Sun,

Blink 182

March: System Shock 2, Thief, Trick

David: System Shock 2, Outcast, Super Furry

Animals

Malcolm: System Shock 2, Quake 3 test, Detroit

Techno, Pizzicato 5

# Regulation "new look" editorial #1

May I draw your attention to the New Improved PC PowerPlay. Without messing with the Gaming Goodness(tm) you've come to know and love (don't deny it, we can feel your love from here), we've managed to give PCPP a makeover to be proud of.

Sure, many of the changes are superficial and purely design oriented, but seeing as you'll be staring at the pages for, we're sure, many hours, we may as well make them as dandy as possible.

Changes of more substance include the expanded Net Game News section, where we'll give more attention to online games that don't start with "Q". We've roped in some specialists for particular genres too - we managed this triumphant recruitment feat by playing everything online over the last few years, paying attention to who always wins, and after making sure they can spell, offering these game masters a job.

Because the previews section is so vitally important to your lives; being where you find out in advance what you'll be doing in a couple of months (that's gotta be useful), we've given it a solid thrashing. Now we're able to fit more games in, while still doing big previews for the special games we think you'll love most. We've called this new

section "Spotlight", and are still congratulating ourselves on our cleverness even as you read.

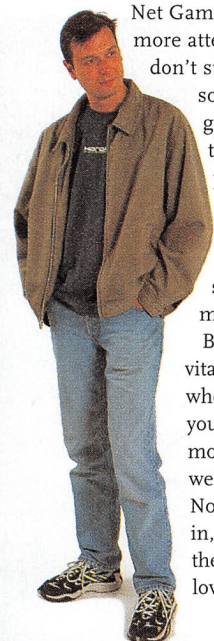
The bit you'll probably (you better!) notice that is most different are our review pages. By some miracle of publishing science, we've managed to complement the most penetrating and amusing reviews in the games mag world, with extra bits of incredibly useful information. Because we're blessed with Malcolm the Wonder Art Director Who Never Gets Angry, the pages look more beautiful than ever, while packing in the stuff we think we need to tell you.

And other bits. Little bits and bigger bits. But all new bits. Without changing the heart and soul, the look and feel of PCPP, we've managed to pretty it up and cram in more gamestuff than ever before. And all this for the same coverprice, which hasn't gone up in the 4 years since we launched, by the way...

Another "by the way", if you've ever wondered why we don't run Freak of the Month anymore - it's because you lot don't send in freaky pics of yourself! We get a few from time to time - but only of normal looking folk. No way are you all normal and boring, it's just not possible! We want pics of you severely disturbed readers so we can go to work and embarrass you in the public forum. So, send in (no email attachments please) your least flattering pic, and we'll do the rest. Don't trust us.

Otherwise, turn the page and enter PCPP, you'll find it a warm and welcoming place, friend.

**Ben Mansill**  
Editor



above: Ben (not actual size).



# CD POWERPLAY #42

The original dose of Dr. Harry's Gaming Medicine™.

## Starting the PC PowerPlay CD

Welcome to the PCPowerPlay double cover CD. We have included all the popular programs to make the most of your PC. Using the CD is easy. Simply insert the CD into your CDROM drive and it should automatically bring up the Menu interface. (If not, don't panic, just click on the RUNME.BAT file to manually install the program). Once the menu is up, you can navigate the screens using your mouse. Click on the category of your choice (eg Education, Fun, Games, etc.) to begin. Have a look at the programs, and if you see something you like to try out, just click on it. Depending on your choice, the program will either install itself to the hard drive or run straight off the CD.

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## UTILITIES

### Adobe Acrobat Reader 4.0

The Adobe Acrobat Reader allows you to browse portable document format (PDF) files that have been created by Adobe Acrobat. It also enables you to fill in visually rich, interactive PDF forms. Plug-ins for both Netscape Navigator and Internet Explorer are included and automatically installed.

### Advanced Call Center 2.9.5

Advanced Caller ID detector, voice manager and telephone auto-answering machine for voice modems. It can reside in system tray, monitoring and handling incoming voice calls. It provides a pop-up window when a call is received and allows you to record conversation and play it back through modem or sound card. Features 'black list' and 'white list' features, customizable sound alarms, ICQ-type status selection. Can run automatically as a telephone answering machine.

### CuteFTP 3.0.2

CuteFTP is a file transfer application that's easy for beginners to use and has enough features to be useful to power-users as well. It uses drag and drop, bookmarks, automatic renaming, and download resuming to make FTP easier, and it features a macro that you can use to record frequent tasks and play them back later with another file.

### GameSpy 3D 2.8

GameSpy is a tool for Internet gaming that allows you to get server listings from anywhere on the Internet. Players of multiplayer Quake, QuakeWorld, Quake II, Shogo, Sin, Blood 2, Hexen II, Heretic II, Unreal, and Half-Life can use GameSpy to find lots of

## GP500

**Hasbro Interactive**

**Category:** Driving Simulator

**Multiplayer Support:** TCP/IP, IPX

**3D Support:** Direct 3D

**Need:** P200, 32MB, SVGA

**Want:** P11 266, 64MB, SVGA 4MB



GP500 the most accurate motorcycle simulation ever made. Race against the world's elite motorcycle racers on the fastest accelerating machines on the planet. Every track, every rider, and every team on the Grand Prix circuit is here, and waiting for your challenge. You'll be wrestling with your 500cc racing machine on every curve against 23 other riders in waves of competition. GP500 combines frighteningly realistic models with authentic rider AI. The GP500 demo lets you race on the Mugello track. The practice time is 6 minutes for the 3 laps, and the Qualify time is 12 minutes for the 5 laps. You can choose from any of the six main race team bikes. You can save your single race or replay. The maximum number of computer-controlled riders is eight. In multiplayer, the maximum number of human players is four (and the max number of AI riders is four).



## Abomination: The Nemesis Project

**Eidos Interactive**

**Category:** Real-time Strategy

**Multiplayer Support:**

TCP/IP, IPX, Modem, Serial

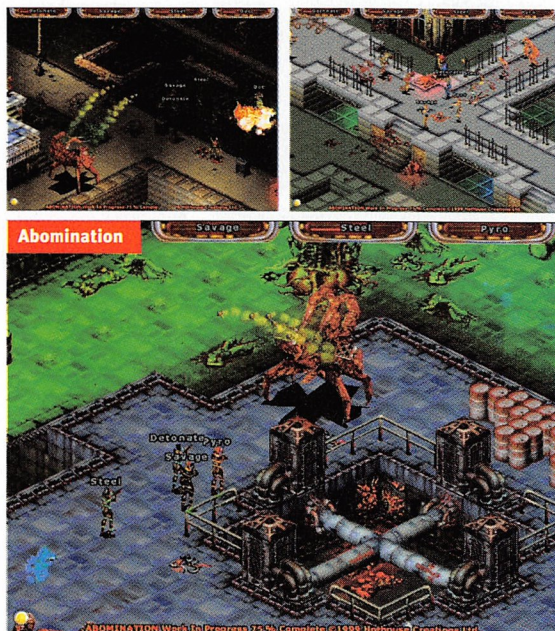
**3D Support:** N/A

**Minimum:** P166, 32MB, SVGA

**Recommend:** P233, 64MB, SVGA 2MB

The plague is once again stalking the earth. In six days a superpower has vanished under the heels of the most virulent virus humanity has ever known. No cure, no hope. Only death. As the devastation spread, so did the insanity. A cult blossomed as the body count rose. Calling themselves the Faithful, they preached the demise of mankind and the absolution of the BROOD. 'Embrace the true Faith or suffer

damnation.' In the bowels of a classified government complex, the eight survivors of Project Nemesis awake to a New World. Nemesis, a black ops program, sought to create the ultimate covert operative. Genetically augmented volunteers from Delta, SEALs, and Force Recon were engineered to be the ultimate weapons for low intensity conflicts. Now they have to fight a war against a different kind of enemy...





PREVIEWED pg44



## Battlezone II

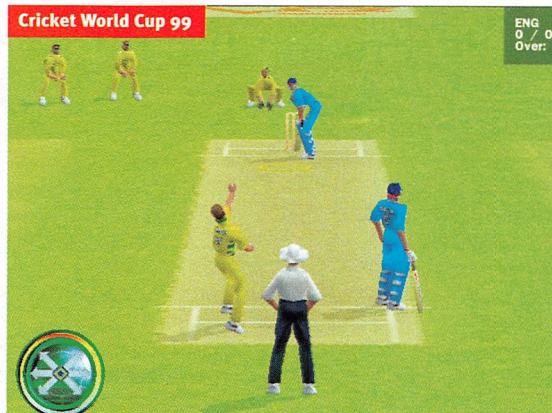
**Activision**

**Category:** Realtime Strategy  
**Multiplayer Support:** TCP/IP, IPX  
**3D Support:** Direct 3D  
**Need:** P200, 32MB, SVGA 2MB  
**Want:** P11-266, 64MB, SVGA 4MB

Jump in and take command in a fight that spans six exotic worlds with diverse environments - from steaming, swampy jungles crawling with deadly creatures, rocky wastelands strewn with boiling lava pits to ruined cities half-buried in nuclear snow. Players start by building a base from which they command a force of armored vehicles, infantry, and aircraft through a series of exploratory, offensive and defensive missions. Gamers will drive a variety of tanks and walkers, pilot the scout ships, and even jump out and fight an evil and challenging alien enemy on foot. Each side will choose from an arsenal of powerful weapons including guided missiles, mortars, mines and bazookas.



Cricket World Cup 99



### B-Hunter

**Midas Interactive**

**Category:** 3D Shooter  
**Multiplayer Support:** Same Computer / Split Screen  
**3D Support:** 3DFX  
**Minimum:** P133, 16MB, SVGA  
**Recommend:** P166, 32MB, SVGA 4MB

The future: cities have grown enormously with buildings towering high above what used to be streets. Hovercraft have replaced cars as the main mean of transportation, and the crime rate has risen to frightening heights. The Bounty Hunters are people trying to make a living out of the crime, taking over jobs the police has given up on long ago. You are one of the ragged individuals trying to make your way to fame and wealth through hunting the criminal elements of the city.

### Cricket World Cup 99

**EA Sports**

**Category:** Sports  
**Multiplayer Support:** n/a  
**3D Support:** 3DFX  
**Minimum:** P166, 32MB, SVGA  
**Recommend:** P200, 64MB, SVGA 2MB

It's a Carnival of Cricket. EA SPORTS present the only official game of the Cricket World Cup 99. Recreate the world's most prestigious cricket competition with all the major grounds including Lords, the Oval and Old Trafford. You are playing the second innings of a cliffhanger 20 over match between England and India. India is batting and need 33 runs off 4 overs in order to beat the English total of 102. English need to get the last 5 Indian batsmen out in 4 overs. Both sides have their work cut out for them!

## Midtown Madness

**Microsoft**

**Category:** Driving Action  
**Multiplayer Support:** TCP/IP, IPX  
**3D Support:** Direct 3D  
**Minimum:** P166, 32MB, SVGA  
**Recommend:** P233, 64MB, SVGA 2MB

Midtown Madness combines the challenge of competitive racing, the strategy of urban navigation, the freedom of unrestrained exploration and the thrill of the chase within a realistically modeled, ever-changing and fully interactive city environment. Set within the "mean streets" of Chicago, players must blast through miles of roads, shortcuts, neighborhoods and sometimes even buildings to beat the competition. But getting there is only half the fun. Gamers must outwit their opponents, not just out-drive them.

The trial version includes three cars: the city bus, '99 Ford Mustang, and the Panoz Roadster. Multiplayer support on the MSN Gaming Zone is also enabled.



## UTILITIES

► servers for multi-play. It provides detailed information for each server and can launch games and connect you to the server you want to join. GameSpy also can join the Internet game you specify and offers many other cool features. This release adds Starsiege: Tribes support.

### ICQ 99b

The latest release of ICQ ("I seek you"), the popular messaging program that lets you communicate with friends and colleagues in real time over the internet. This update offers improved security features. You can seek out friends on the ICQ network by entering their ICQ number, name, nickname, or email address. Once your contact list is set up, you'll be notified when your friends are online so that you can chat; send instant messages, files, and URLs; play games; or just hang out.

### Internet Turbo 99

Internet Turbo 99 optimizes your Internet connection by changing certain Windows settings in order to prevent fragmentation of data transfers. Internet Turbo adjusts your computer's MTU (Maximum Transmission Unit), RWIN (Receive Window), TTL (Time To Live), PMTU (Path Maximum Transmission Unit), and NDI Cache settings to help decrease fragmentation and boost your data transfer rates. You can manually configure these settings yourself or choose to have the program automatically configure them for you. Both dial-up and LAN connections are supported, as are all software and hardware adapters. You can easily restore your default Windows settings, and a registry back-up utility is included.

### Microsoft Windows Media Player

Microsoft Windows Media Player is based on the DirectShow architecture and designed to provide the most extensible, flexible, and convenient player for accessing multimedia content. You can play most file formats, including Windows Media (formerly NetShow), ASF, MPEG-1, MPEG-2, WAV, AVI, MIDI, VOD, AU, MP3, and QuickTime files—all from one easy-to-use application. A Favorites menu lets you save your favorite clips for quick and easy replay. The menu even contains pointers to cool content sites. Windows Media Player can play anything from low-bandwidth audio to full-screen video, and you can resize the video window, even up to full screen, for optimal placement.





## UTILITIES

## ► mIRC

This highly configurable IRC client features a clean and intuitive user interface, an events handler, and full send and receive capabilities for DCC (direct client connection) file. The program offers colored text lines, aliases, remote commands, and support for sound. It even includes an option to load your own backgrounds for virtually all windows available in mIRC. In this version, an option has been added that automatically opens Web sites as they are mentioned in a conversation. Your Away status is now shown in the Status window title bar, you can ignore any DCC Sends that match specified filenames or types, and the message highlight feature has been highly improved. A new lock feature has been added that allows you to password protect the program and disable various features. Several other improvements and fixes have also been included in this version.

## Norton Utilities 4.0

Norton Utilities provides a suite of utilities that will aid users in problem solving and in gaining control of the system. Norton WinDoctor is a standalone utility that extends problem-solving capabilities. LiveUpdate Pro is a new Internet-based utility that provides patches for Norton Utilities, as well as for any other software applications and hardware drivers on the user's system. Norton CrashGuard provides crash and recovery protection, and Norton Zip Rescue offers disaster recovery that can also rescue information on an Iomega Zip Disk. Norton System Doctor helps to keep computers free of problems and working at peak performance. Norton SpeedStart optimizes the start-up speed of launching applications, Norton Optimization Wizard provides several system optimization functions, and Speed Disk provides disk optimization. Also included in the suite is a free, limited-time subscription to Norton Web Services.

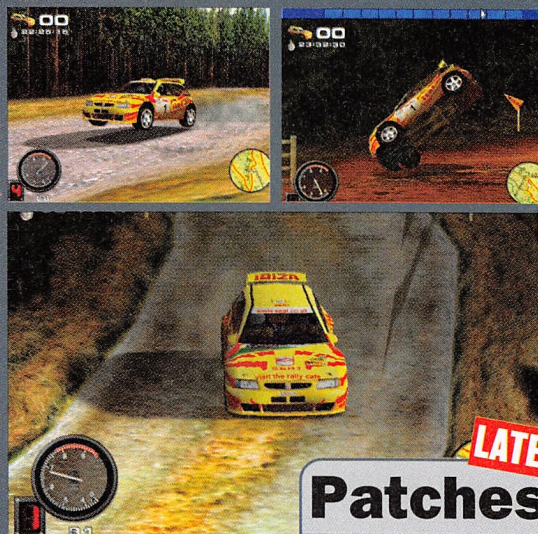
## Rally Championship

## Europress

Category: Driving Simulator

You're one of motorsport's elite, facing a few grueling stages of the world's toughest test on wheels. Choose from an impressive line-up of the world's top, rally-bred cars, set your options and plunge into a 250-mile simulation of the most intense off-road action you'll ever experience.

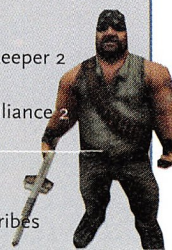
As rally enthusiasts eagerly await the launch, it has been revealed that Rally Championship will shock the market with a number of new features that have never been seen before. Rally Championship includes multiple driving positions, fully operational 3D dashboard instruments, a superb selection of top rally cars, new crash, collision and damage routines and comprehensive multi-player options - adding up to the most exciting driving experience you can have without getting into a car and doing the real thing.



LATEST

## Patches

Blood 2  
Braveheart  
Descent 3  
Dungeon Keeper 2  
Half-Life  
Jagged Alliance 2  
Kingpin  
Quake 2  
Sin  
Starsiege Tribes  
Ultima VIII  
Unreal



## Trainers

Aliens Vs Predator  
Commandos 2  
Darkstone  
Half-Life Co-op level  
ReVolt  
System Shock 2 Savegames

## FreeSpace 2

## Interplay

Category: Fight Simulator

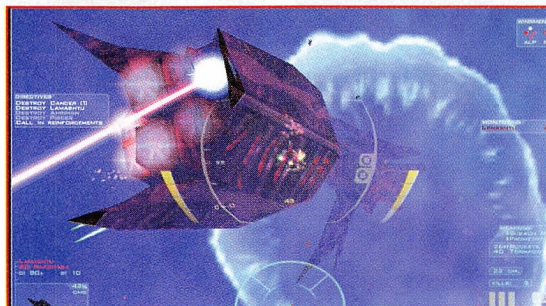
Multiplayer Support:

TCP/IP, IPX

3D Support: Direct 3D, 3DFX

Need: P200, 32MB, SVGA

Want: PII 266, 64MB, SVGA 2MB



FreeSpace 2 continues in the year 2367, 32 years after the Great War. The imposing forces of the Shivans have surfaced again, threatening the survival of the Terrans and the Vasudans. In this post-war era, rebellion and civil

war jeopardize the security of the colonies and the future of both the Terrans and Vasudans. While the rebellion rages on in the remote areas of Terran space, players serve as part of

the Galactic Terran Vasudan Alliance (GTVA), monitoring and intervening in the interstellar skirmish.

## Driver

## GT Interactive

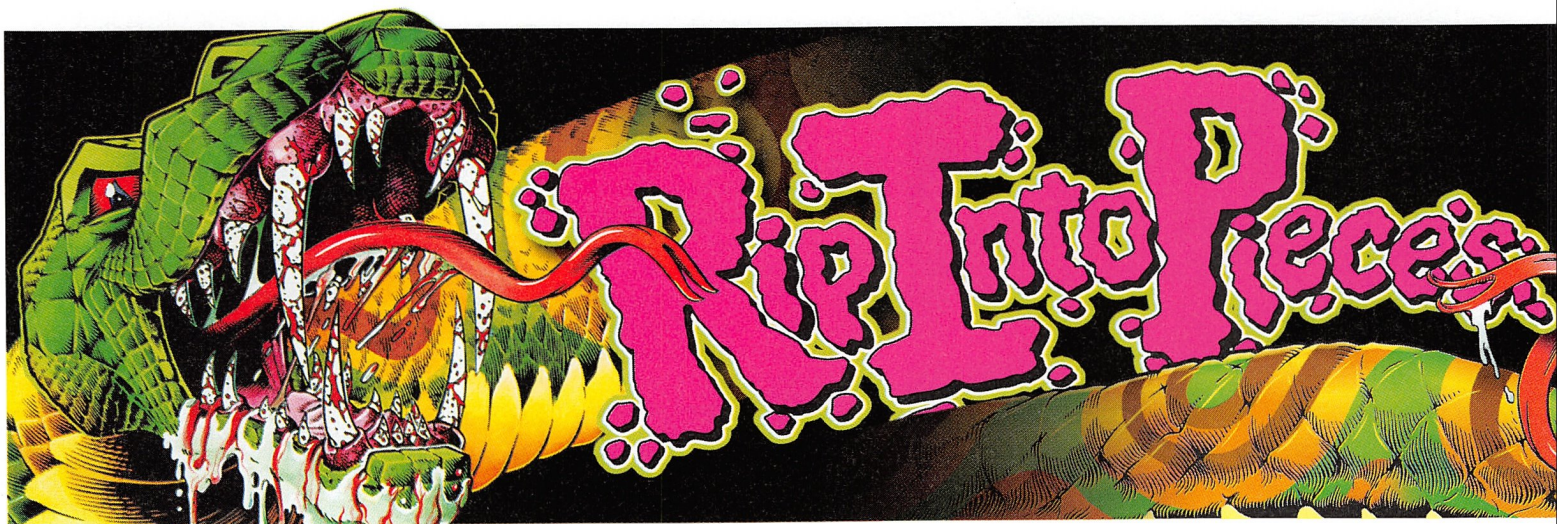
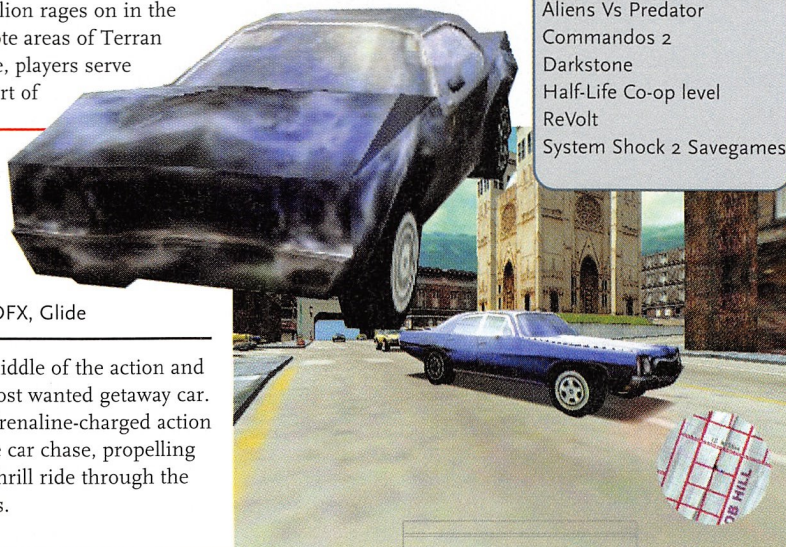
Category: Driving Action

Need: P200, 32MB,

SVGA 2MB

Want: PII 266, 64MB, SVGA 4MB, 3DFX, Glide

Driver puts gamers right into the middle of the action and squarely behind the wheel of the most wanted getaway car. Driver delivers clutch-your-seats, adrenaline-charged action of a heart-stopping, Hollywood-style car chase, propelling players along a high-speed, all-out thrill ride through the wild streets of four major U.S. cities.





REVIEWED pg64



## System Shock 2

EA

**Category:** Action/RPG  
**Multiplayer Support:** n/a  
**3D Hardware Support:** Direct 3D  
**Need:** P200, 64MB, SVGA  
**Want:** PII-266, 64MB, SVGA 2MB

Match wits with the egomaniacal cyber-being SHODAN in this unique combination of sci-fi horror role playing and 1st-person gameplay. Includes an incredibly rich science fiction role-playing game system, detailed character generation and growth, inventory and equipping, traits. System Shock 2 proves that real RPGs can also feature incredible 3D technology.



Sinistar



## Seven Kingdoms II: The Fryhtan Wars

Enlight Software

**Category:** Real-time Strategy  
**Multiplayer Support:** TCP/IP, Net Play  
**3D Support:** Direct 3D, 3DFX  
**Need:** P200, 32MB, SVGA 2MB  
**Want:** PII 266, 64MB, SVGA 8MB

The long-awaited sequel to Seven Kingdoms is here. In Seven Kingdoms II, The Fryhtan Wars you can take charge of one of 12 ancient kingdoms or you can give your darker side free reign and play as the leader of a Fryhtan horde. Seven Kingdoms II gives you heroes, 3D rolling terrain, a Random Campaign Generator, an incredible number of fighting units and weapons, more beautiful and detailed buildings than you will know what to do with, expanded espionage and research capabilities as well as

numerous other new features.

## Sinistar: Unleashed

THQ

**Category:** Space Combat  
**Multiplayer Support:** n/a  
**3D Hardware Support:** Direct 3D  
**Need:** P2-233, 64MB, SVGA 2MB  
**Want:** PII 300, 128MB, SVGA 4MB

Sinistar: Unleashed blasts you into a hostile universe fraught with danger. A space dwelling species of supreme evil is on the verge of creating the ultimate bio-mechanical weapon: the Sinistar. When they succeed, they will invade our universe, annihilating humanity and all other life. You must destroy these evil beings before they embark on their malevolent crusade.

## UTILITIES

### SumoDance Screensaver

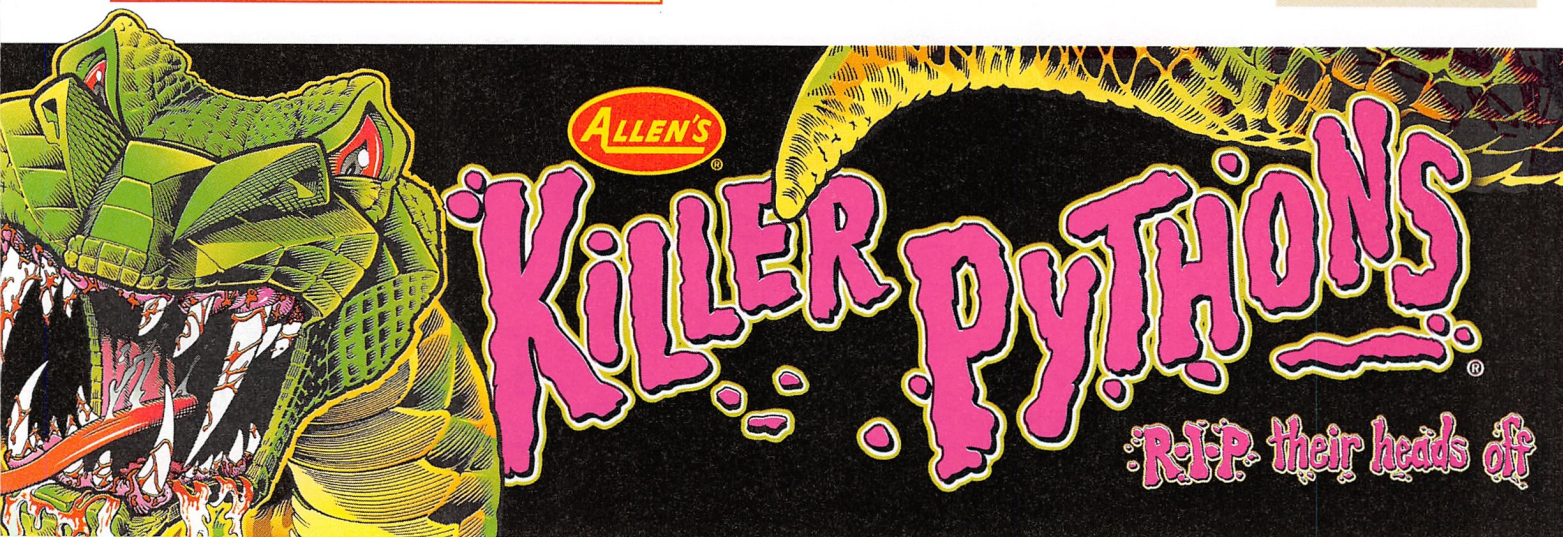
SumoDance is the latest release from screensaver hit maker Rhode Island Soft Systems. SumoDance is an irreverent screensaver featuring different "sumo dancers" doing a variety of dance moves while music plays in the background.

### VegasTM Pro

Sonic Foundry proudly introduces VegasTM Pro, an eagerly-awaited, technologically-advanced multitrack media editing system. VegasTM Pro provides the ultimate audio/media production and Internet authoring tool - the sonic quality and processing power professionals expect from Sonic Foundry, in an efficient, dynamic production environment. With VegasTM Pro you can mix file properties, bit depths, and sampling rates, all on a single track without many confusing dialog boxes. You can edit during playback, perform non-destructive crossfade edits, and run multiple simultaneous plug-in effects, all in real time.

### Winzip

WinZip is a straightforward zipping and unzipping utility that includes built-in support for popular Internet file formats such as TAR, ZIP, UUencode, XXencode, BinHex, MIME, and Unix-compressed files. ARJ, LZH, and ARC files are supported via external programs. An optional wizard simplifies unzipping and installing software in ZIP files. New features in WinZip 7.0 include the ability to create self-extracting files that span multiple disks, the ability to print a list of files in a ZIP, sizable and sortable columns in the main window, easier configuration using a tabbed dialog box, an improved install feature, optional support for IE 4.0-style "one-click open," and a configurable toolbar with 21 new button graphics.





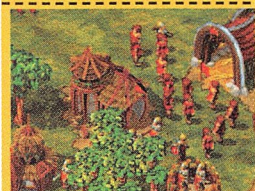
# GAMENEWS

**HEADLINES:** Alice in Wonderland • Wolfenstein re-make • Australia's Gaming Convention  
Lemmings Return • Le Mans Racing • Blizzard's New Game!

## SIDELINES

### ADD-ON NEWS

It's been a real busy month for add-ons, re-releases and expansion packs with new announcements seemingly arriving every day. Here are some of the major ones: PopTop's lauded follow-up to the Sid Meier classic Railroad Tycoon has been granted a Gold Edition release. Collecting together the originally released game, the expansion pack entitled The Second Century (which featured new scenarios, among other gameplay improvements) and the Official Strategy Guide (unfortunately only in HTML format, but one would assume it to be still just as useful as the printed version), this new edition will also include an additional twelve scenarios. Published by Gathering Of Developers, Railroad Tycoon 2 Gold should be available in early October.



### LITTLE BLOKES. SORT OF.

The world's most famous little blokes are back! Except they're not. Well, unless they've all had sex changes - transgendered little blokes, anyone? Let us explain: Blue Byte are offering the first Settlers 3 add-on, called Quest of the Amazons, which ought to be available by the time you read this. Based around the all-female Amazon tribe, obviously, it features new characters, 30 new buildings, 24 extra missions as well as more single and multiplayer maps. The joys of single-breasted strategy await!

### ROLLING ON

Added Attractions is the quite clever title of the forthcoming RollerCoaster Tycoon expansion. Amongst the expected news of bonus scenarios and rides (including the ominous sounding Steel Twister and the archaic Virginia Reel) is a rather novel promotional technique. After signing a deal with UK theme park Alton Towers, Microprose have designed an original Alton Towers scenario to be made available for download from the official website in October.

# ALICE IN QUAKE LAND

Former id software game and level designer American McGee has officially announced that his new development team, Rogue Entertainment, are planning a modern adaptation of Lewis Carroll's classic childhood tale Alice In Wonderland. The proposed title will be created with the Quake 3: Arena graphics engine.

As Alice, you'll be doing more than just chasing white rabbits; you'll have to combat the trials of a hostile Wonderland as you oppose the villainous Queen of Hearts. Based loosely on the original surreal tale, Alice will encounter memorable characters such as the Cheshire Cat, Tweedledum and Tweedledee, and the Mad Hatter, of course, as well as a host of strange creatures devised solely for the game.

Although concrete details are obviously scarce at this early stage, it is known that the action will be

viewed through third-person perspective, allowing the strong character design to come to the fore. Interestingly, most of the development time will apparently concentrate on the single player game. Such a design choice is in clear contrast to id's present work on Quake 3, though McGee has hinted at the possibility of both a first-person option and a multiplayer game.

American McGee worked at id for four years, employing his undoubted talents behind all of id's hallmark titles from Doom to Quake 2. Since leaving id to take on the position of Creative Director at Electronic Arts, Alice is his first title. With a dark and morbid twist as comprehensive as the collective curves of the Quake 3 engine, not to mention a storyline adapted from such a classic novel, McGee looks to be embarking on his most demanding project yet. Alice is scheduled for release at the end of next year.



The organic world design in Alice should test the famed curved surfaces of the Quake 3 engine.



Return To Wolfenstein will look something like this. Probably.



# WOLFENSTEIN LIVES!

What if we were to say you might be playing Wolfenstein 3D next year? Don't laugh, it could happen. Rumours have been circulating for some time that id Software were interested in resurrecting the game that kickstarted the whole first-person action genre as we know it today. But which rumour should we believe? While it's been reported that both Raven Software

(Hexen 2) and Xatrix Entertainment (Kingpin) have each presented to id a demo of a game tentatively titled Return To Wolfenstein, the inside word is that Xatrix have already been given the go ahead by John Carmack himself and the only factor holding back an official announcement is a publishing deal.

Although neither Raven nor Xatrix will comment, Todd

Hollenshead, the president and CEO of id, made the following statement: "I find the prospect exciting and have been attempting to put the elements in place. If and when this becomes a reality, we will have an announcement." While a straight remake of the first game is very unlikely, a genuine sequel that makes the most of present technology would be welcome indeed.

## AUSTRALIA'S ANSWER TO E3

Inspired by the success of game expos such as E3 in the US, the Tokyo Game Show, and Europe's ECTS, Australia will soon have its very own rival gaming exhibition. Conveniently scheduled just two weeks prior to Christmas - from the 10th to the 12th of December, to be precise - the Australian

Computer Games Expo 1999, as it's officially known, will provide this country's premiere of the most exciting games and gaming technologies from all over the world.

PC games are sure to offer up plenty of highlights over the three days, but the next generation consoles from Sega and Sony will appear as well. The show takes place at the Homebush Exhibition complex in Sydney and is anticipated to house nearly 5,000 square metres of Gaming Goodness. We'll be there in force, and we hope - nay, expect - to see you there, too!

Every show needs its mascot. Strangely, the ACGE seem to have chosen Evangelion's Ayanami Rei as their's

## THE LEMMINGS ARE BACK!



In early September, Psygnosis unveiled their plans to let loose once again perhaps their most famous game characters. For just two weeks, interested parties were able to download a limited edition demo, curiously titled Lemmings Revolution. Intended as a way to test the water for a possible return to the computer game world of everyone's favourite suicidal rodents, the demo was also accompanied by a questionnaire for those inclined to record their comments. The response must have been overwhelming as, even after trying for a whole day, we couldn't manage to access the requisite download site. Our disappointment was alleviated to a certain degree by the four screenshots available, each illustrating the game's adoption of a pseudo-3D environment that appeared far more feasible than that found in the ill-judged Lemmings 3D. Let's hope Psygnosis are encouraged by the reaction to the demo and persist with development because, as we all know, those Lemmings never really died.



## SIDELINES

### BATTLE PACK

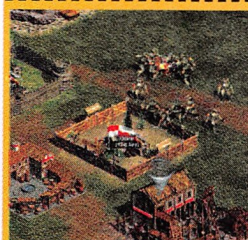
Coinciding nicely with our preview of Battlezone 2 (see p44 for the full story) comes word that Battlezone Gold will be hitting the shelves imminently. Containing the full game, plus two add-ons (Red Odyssey and the as-yet-unreleased Battlegrounds) and the Official Strategy Guide (the proper printed version this time), as well as a tasty demo of the sequel, Activision prove themselves to be very generous indeed.

### H&D 2

Fresh from signing a publishing agreement with Take 2, Hidden & Dangerous developer Illusions Softworks have not only announced that there will be a mission pack to their innovative tactical action game, but that work on a full-blown sequel is already underway. Accompanying these two titles will be a duo of original games, Flying Heroes and Gangster.

### MECH GOLD

Better late than never is the response to news that Microprose are preparing Mechcommander Gold. A novel - if perhaps less than entirely successful - attempt to expand the typical real-time strategy horizons upon initial release, this new addition introduces plenty of weapons, mechs and missions. Suggesting that this will be more than a quick rehash, other promised features include a mission editor, some revised difficulty levels, and a revamped waypoint system.



### SEVEN KINGDOMS 2 DEAL

The troubled development of Enlight Software's Seven Kingdoms sequel appears to be finally over, with Ubi Soft agreeing to publish the title. After the French company took over the game's original publisher, Interactive Magic, initial reports indicated that Seven Kingdoms 2 would be without a deal; at this point, Enlight were considering self-publishing the game via the internet. Thankfully, the two parties have patched up relations - and, more importantly, come to a compatible financial arrangement - meaning this eagerly-awaited, empire building strategy game should be with us in time for review next issue.



## SIDELINES

## THEME SIM

Bullfrog's forthcoming sequel to Theme Park has undergone a change of identity. Formerly known as Theme Park World, the new challenger to Rollercoaster Tycoon will now be titled Sim Theme Park, a switch made easier thanks to Bullfrog's long-time ties with the holders of the Sim franchise, Electronic Arts. Hopefully we'll be able to take Sim Theme Park round the loop-the-loop next month.

## PC FFVIII

The eighth edition of perhaps the most popular role-playing series ever is coming to PC. After celebrating the success of the PC port of Final Fantasy VII, Eidos are now preparing to let us experience the adventures of Squall Lionheart and Rinoa Heartilly, as they battle the evil Seifer Almasy in the cleverly-titled Final Fantasy VIII. With an Australian release of the Playstation version still not due for several months yet, we shouldn't expect the PC conversion any sooner than early next year.

## BO AND LUKE AND DAISY

Dukes Of Hazzard fans keenly hanging out for the imminent licenced action game from GT should be advised to keep their engines running a little longer. Original developers Engineering Animation bailed when their games house was shut down, leaving the completion of the project in the hands of Sinister Games (also responsible for Shadow Company, see Spotlight p21). The game will take advantage of the 3D engine and technology constructed by Attention To Detail for use in Rollcage.

## MINI'S GO WILD IN ITALY

Here's a cool rumour for you: SCI, the creators of the infamous Carmageddon, have reputedly got the licence to cult classic Sixties film, The Italian Job. The slim possibility of playing a game where you can pretend to be Michael Caine running down old ladies in a mini sounds extremely enticing.

## DUKE NUKEM TAKING FOREVER

As time passes, Duke Nukem Forever is seeming less like a game title and more like the projected development period. This month news arrived that 3D Realms are looking to hire another programmer to assist them in getting the damn game finished. The requirements for the job are: professional experience with the Unreal engine, having worked on a similar type of game before, as well as having produced mods for games like Unreal, Quake and Half-Life. We hear there are some people over at ION Storm who might fit the bill perfectly.

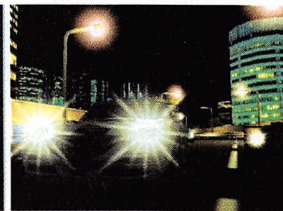


## ON THE ROAD AGAIN

After several years in the wilderness, innocent victim of one too many average games, the legendary Test Drive series will return next year. Now a property of Infogrames, the Test Drive name is to be used to promote the French publisher's two forthcoming racing game releases. Test Drive Le Mans,

previously titled Le Mans 24 Hours, is a simulation of the world's best known endurance motor race. Emphasising realism above all, the game features day/night transitions, accurate physics, three competition classes, and a full-length race distance option. The second title is Test Drive Cycles which, as the

name implies, is a motorbike sim. Geared more toward the casual racer, Cycles has acquired more than 30 official bike licenses and ventures across the globe (from Bali and Hong Kong to Amsterdam and the USA) in search of the perfect racing track. Both titles are expected around the middle of next year.



A full-length race distance option? All 24 hours of it? Can't wait for that.

STOP PRESS!

## WARCRAFT III

Just before deadline, Blizzard chose London's ECTS as the venue to reveal details of their next game after Diablo 2. Coining a new genre, Warcraft III will be a Role-Playing Strategy game that places greater emphasis upon controlling a small band of units and the completion of quests, leaving behind much of the resource management direction of previous titles. In making the announcement, Blizzard's President, Mike Morhaime, had this to say: "Our goal with Warcraft III is to carve out a new direction for strategy games by incorporating the interactive dynamics present in role-playing games and applying them in a competitive strategic combat environment."





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# COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2

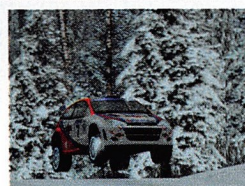
• Genre: Lonely Driving • Developer: Codemasters • Due: 2nd Qtr 2000



These are the in-game graphics. Wow!

■ Easily the premier rally sim on any system, Colin McRae Rally garnered countless accolades upon its release last year, including a wildly impressive 94% in PCPP #30. Although perhaps a console game at heart, McRae managed to transcend the idiosyncracies of its origins and emerged on the PC as one of the all-time greats. For this second iteration, Codemasters have endeavoured to utilise the expertise of the game's namesake to ensure that they have not only meet the demands of portraying accurate physics, but also produced a game that completely captures the feel of driving at the limit.

While the engine as a whole has had an overhaul, beyond the enhanced visual thrills there are a host of new features that impact the gameplay. From simple dents in the bodywork to torn spoilers trailing behind the car or even losing a wheel, all damage will affect performance to greater or lesser degrees. Although situated in real world locations, the tracks are entirely fictional. Codemasters argue that this allows them more creative freedom to design tracks that take full advantage of the possibilities a virtual world offers. We'll see if they're right sometime early next year.



## AUSTRALIA'S MOST WANTED

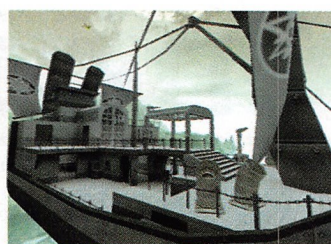
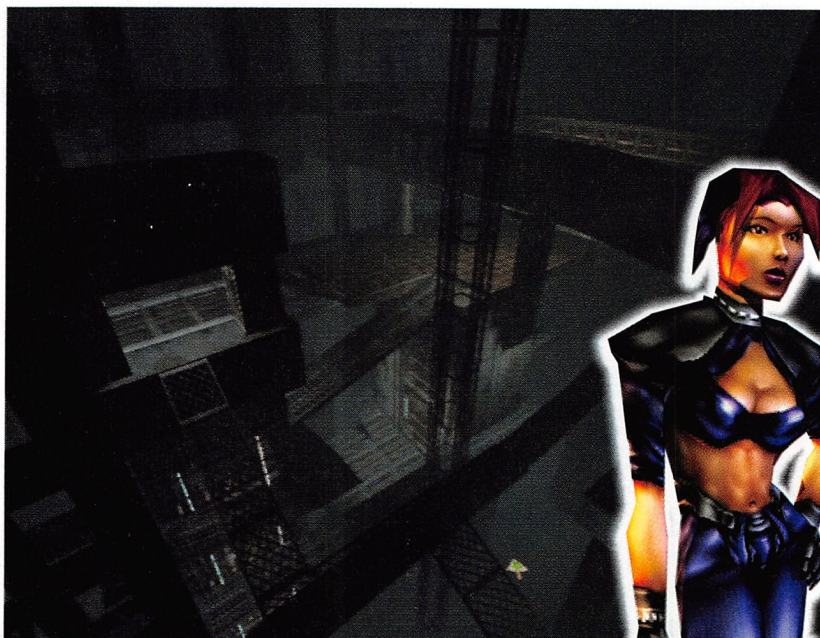
PCPP wants to know what are Australia's Most Wanted Games. Which games are you waiting for? Which have you got slaving uncontrollably? Which games cause pools of unsightly drool to form at your feet when you hear the merest mention of its name? Send your Top Five Most Wanted Games to: [wanted@pcpowerplay.next.com.au](mailto:wanted@pcpowerplay.next.com.au)

Conrad Leung of Ashfield, NSW, voted for Diablo 2 and has won a huge, yellow Tonka truck courtesy of Hasbro Interactive for his trouble. Cheers!

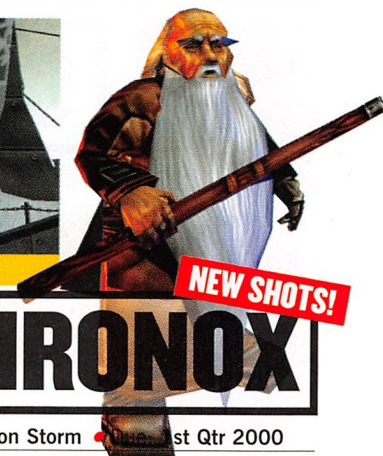
- |    |                                  |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 1  | C&C: TIBERIAN SUN                |
| 2  | Quake 3: Arena                   |
| 3  | Diablo 2                         |
| 4  | Dark Reign 2                     |
| 5  | Age of Empires 2                 |
| 6  | Duke Nukem Forever               |
| 7  | Bathurst Sim                     |
| 8  | Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation |
| 9  | Deus Ex                          |
| 10 | Team Fortress 2                  |







(right) Is that you, Prumpy?



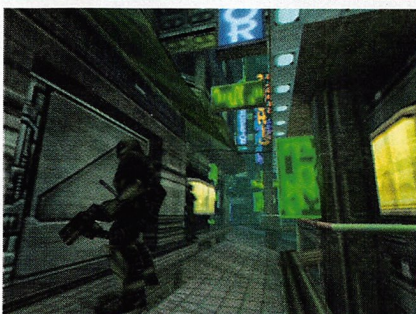
NEW SHOTS!

## ANACHRONOX

• Genre: RPG • Developer: Ion Storm • Due: 4th Qtr 2000

As these new shots illustrate, Tom Hall's Anachronox is beginning to have that fully-formed look about it. We especially like the garish neon of the virtual locations. Depicting the kind of seriously warped space-time continuum its title would imply, the scale of this Quake 2-engined RPG is as vast as the universe it takes for a setting. At this stage, although

we know some details, the plot remains baffling: Sly Boots and Stiletto uncovering the mystery behind Sender One and Mystech. Uh-huh, time for your medication, Mr Hall. What does impress, however, is the Elementor Weapon System, a device that allows the creation and modification of your weapons. A good gauge of the game's serious RPG leanings, wethinks.



FIRST LOOK!

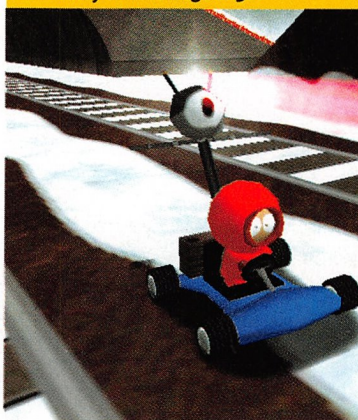
## SOUTH PARK RALLY

• Genre: Arcade Racing • Developer: Acclaim • Due: 4th Qtr '99

Acclaim's Re-Volt recently suggested that the terms "PC" and "console racing" needn't always be mutually exclusive. The new South Park game will further test the validity of such a claim (no pun intended). Pitting the four hilarious postmodern anti-heroes/irritating little bastards (delete as

applicable) against each other and several other mainstay South Park residents, Rally will feature kart racing through the streets, woods, and sewers of South Park, as well as Big Gay Al's Big Gay Animal Sanctuary, natch. No doubt the title's quality will depend upon how well they've paid tribute to Super Mario Kart.

Don't they look strange in 3D.



"How can I hide with this glowing circle following me everywhere?"

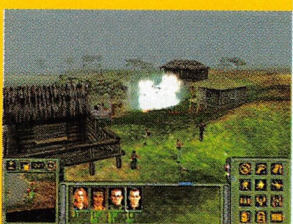


## SHADOW COMPANY

• Genre: Action/Strategy • Developer: Sinister • Due: 4th Qtr '99

In the wake of the success of Rainbow Six, it seems everyone wants to jump aboard the squad-based tactical combat bandwagon. Sinister's Shadow Company, recently signed up for publishing by Ubi Soft, is the latest take on the genre. You command a motley bunch of mercs (up to sixteen at a time, apparently) whose specialty is eliminating subversive elements who are found by your paymasters to

be troublesome. With a nice-looking 3D engine, co-op multiplayer options, and a comprehensive array of weapons and actions, this could be a sleeper hit come the end of the year.



Spotlight

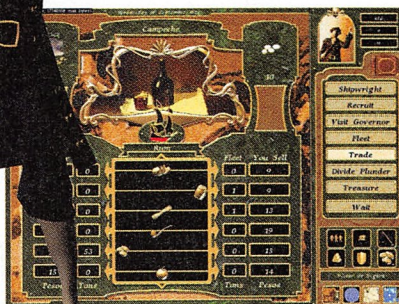


# spotlight

## CUTTHROATS

• Genre: Strategy • Developer: Hothouse • Due: 4th Qtr '99

Yet another in the exhausting line of nautically-themed games to sail past in recent months, Cutthroats comes from UK developers Hothouse, creators of Gangsters and the forthcoming Abomination. The playable code we received would indicate this is on course to be the spiritual successor to Sid Meier's classic Pirates. Trading, cannon-firing, treasure-hunting, bounty-collecting and eyepatch-wearing will consume your time. Although the graphics appear rudimentary, the gameplay should provide a real, erm... hook.



This doesn't look like a very safe place to stash a treasure chest.



NEW SHOTS!

## FORCE COMMANDER

• Genre: RTS • Developer: LucasArts • Due: X'mas

It took 'em long enough, but LucasArts are well and truly on the home-stretch with their first ever Star Wars flavoured RTS game.

Force Commander has undergone a massive facelift since its debut many moons ago. Don't panic! Real-time tactical combat is still the focus, though resource collection and base management has been ousted in favour of a more Myth-like experience.

As an Imperial officer (and

later, a member of the Rebel Alliance), you start each mission (of which there are 24) out aboard a space craft where you choose the make-up of your landing force. Once grounded, fulfilling certain mission objectives earns you command points (experience) which can be traded in for more powerful and advanced units for later missions.

LucasArts are laying the storyline on pretty thick, so expect some engrossing gameplay and plenty of gorgeous cut scenes to boot.



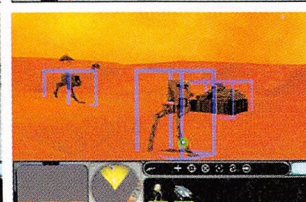
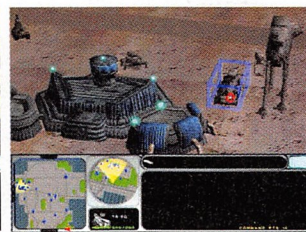
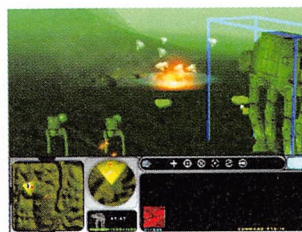
Hey, where are the beards?

## HARLEY DAVIDSON

• Genre: Tattooed Racing • Developer: Wizardworks • Due: 4th Qtr '99

The problem with most motorbike games is the sickening way the view see-saws when you so much as nudge the steering. Wizardworks have concocted a cunning solution to this seemingly intractable flaw: simulate a motorbike that doesn't tilt when it turns! Quite how the Harley - a machine notorious

for its inability to deviate from a straight line - will cope when encountering the obstacles that litter the game's tracks is a dilemma that has surely occupied the developers for some time now. But, of course, as any Harley riding real man wouldn't blink at the prospect of mowing down the local fauna, it's probably a moot point.

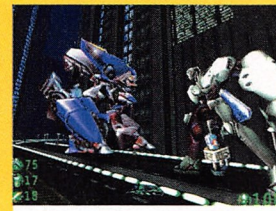


Imperial Walkers on the north ridge!





Let's hope he remembered to wear his wellingtons, eh?



Mechs on the catwalk.

FIRST LOOK!

## SLAVE ZERO

• Genre: Action • Developer: Accolade • Due: 4th Qtr '99

So why is it called Slave Zero? It's the name of the main character, a man-machine hybrid creature - that's the simple answer. A more detailed response might ponder the question: Is man slave to the machine, or vice versa? Philosophical inquiry may have its place in the world, but a psychotically violent action game is not usually one of them. Slave Zero is less a first-person shooter than a full-bore, heavy metal combat game. Taking its cue from the outrageous stylings of Japanese anime such as Macross and Giant Robo, Slave Zero offers all the chromium carnage you would expect when huge hunks of hardware fight to the death. With an arsenal boasting such pleasantries as the Cyclone Assault, the Hellspike Plasma Rail Cannon, and the Valhalla Saturation Missile, it's clear that weaponry occupies a major role in the game. In fact, the eponymous Slave is armed to the teeth so efficiently his incisors have mounted their own laser turrets.

## THE INSIDER

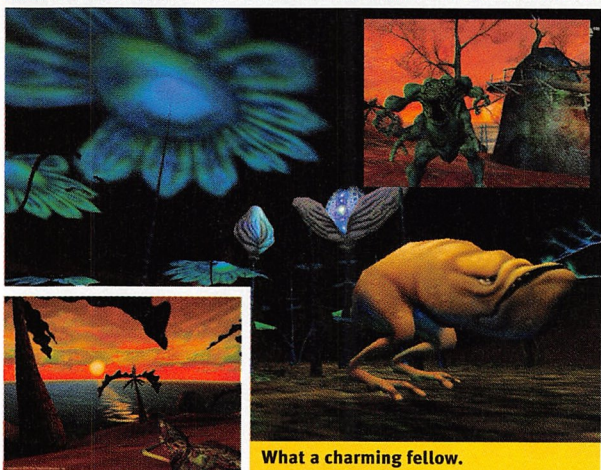
• Genre: Adventure • Developer: Dramaera • Due: 1st Qtr 2000

A real-time adventure set in early 20th century Europe (beginning with Paris) with an art-nouveau ambience and a dashing young man in the lead - sounds like The Last Express to us! Could it be a sequel to the best adventure game ever? Sadly, the answer is no.

Our disappointment is abated somewhat by the fact that The Insider shows much promise on its own merits. Thanks to the NetImmerse engine, the locations and characters are garnished in convincing period detail, while the story ventures into the glamorous worlds of art and espionage. Only the oddly-named hero, Simon Blurr, has us concerned.



(left) Oh.. how debonair!



What a charming fellow.

## EXPERIENCE

• Genre: Action/RPG • Developer: The Whole Experience (WXP)  
• Due: Early 2000

It's hardly surprising that the founders of WXP mostly come from the art and design fields of game development. The rare visual flair of their first game, a kind of thinking man's first-person shooter, is testament to that - and then some. Set in the virtual world of Dagoth Moor, where the principles of evil (war, greed, hatred, pride, etc) are maintained to teach the lessons of history, Experience features a cast of extraordinary creatures inhabiting a wildly surrealistic landscape. Apparently you'll be able to tame and ride some of these beasts, as well as pilot an assortment of vehicles. Looks like Outcast has a competitor in the crazy action/adventuring stakes.

Spotlight

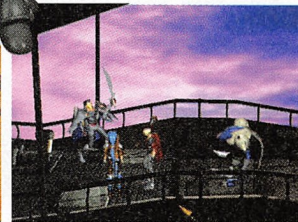
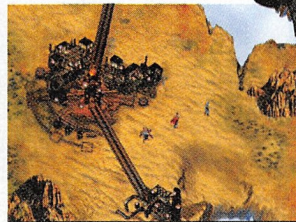
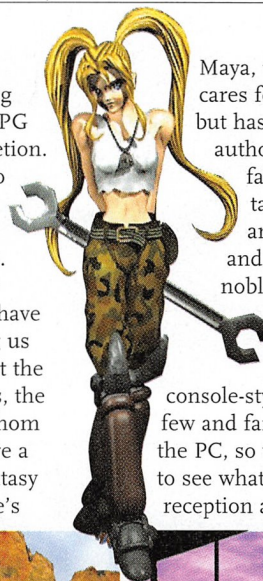


# SEPTERRA CORE

• Genre: **RPG** • Developer: **Monolith** • Due: **3rd Qtr '99**

Monolith's forthcoming anime-inspired RPG is nearing completion. In fact, it ought to be ready for review in time for our next issue. Over the past few weeks, Monolith have been drip-feeding us information about the game's characters, the descriptions of whom lend Septerra Core a distinct Final Fantasy VII flavour. There's

Maya, the girl who cares for her people, but has no respect for authority; Led, the fabulously pony-tailed, teenage army mechanic; and Corgan, the noble paladin type who misses his true love. Japanese console-style RPGs are few and far between on the PC, so we're very keen to see what kind of reception awaits this title.

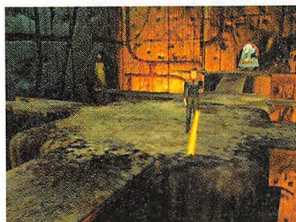


The "jig your antenna for SBS" incantation.

## STAR TREK: HIDDEN EVIL

• Genre: **Adventure** • Developer: **Activision** • Due: **3rd Qtr '99**

Taking its cue from the most recent Star Trek film, *Insurrection*, Activision's new adventure game casts you as a young Starfleet officer tasked with escorting Picard and Data on a crucial diplomatic dealing with the unpredictable Romulans. Needless to say, it all goes pear-shaped and, after much bleeping of comm badges, examining of tricorder, blasting of phasers, and invoking of prime directives, the Federation saves the day. Hidden Evil should benefit from NOT placing the player in the shoes of a Trek regular, instead allowing you to work alongside all your favourite characters. Unfortunately, the release date is still only tentative at this stage.

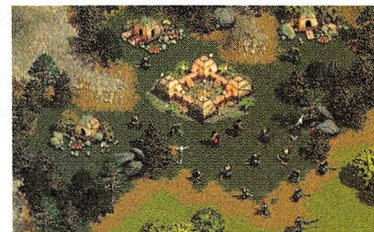
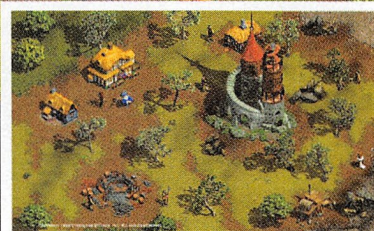


We refuse to caption these screenshots in fear of recrimination.

## MAJESTY

• Genre: **Strategy** • Developer: **Cyberlore**  
• Due: **1st Qtr 2000**

Majesty, subtitled *Sovereign of Arдания*, might appear to be just another fantasy strategy epic. Closer scrutiny reveals a number of highly original elements, chief among which is the "indirect" control method. Certain town structures are built automatically when your empire expands, while the little blokes that these games typically put at your command can only be influenced and not ordered directly. Values are placed on various creatures or locations to make it desirable for your blokes to either visit them or beat them up or whatever you decide. Perhaps the most amusing feature is that the construction of a brothel is inevitable once you've recruited some elves into your city.



Theme Sovereignty?



**Games  
Play**

# Cutthroats

Flint, Shot And Two Smoking Cannons!

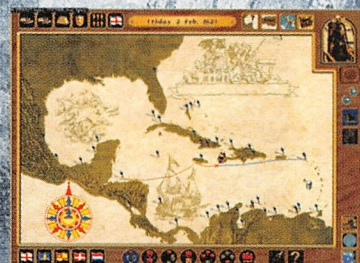
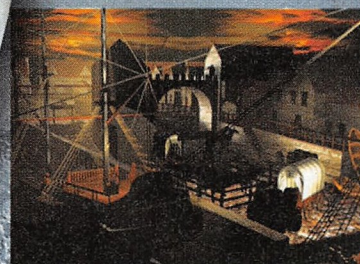
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From the creators of *Gangsters*

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"If Cutthroats isn't worth its weight in gold, we'll cut our own throats" *PC Zone*



From the creators of *Gangsters*

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# STRATEGY GAMING

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE



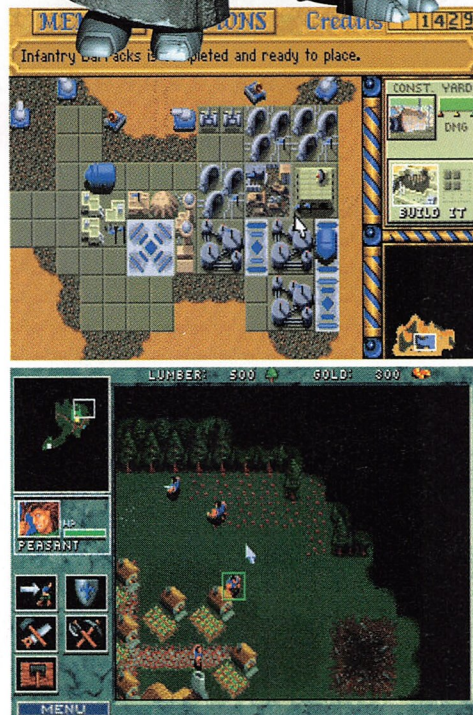




**F**or many of us, 1999 has been a year of contemplation and speculation. The dawning of the new millennium has prompted detailed analysis of past achievements, and provoked imaginations. In examining the entertainment juggernaut that is electronic gaming, it's important to pause and take stock of the trends, defining moments and defining products that have had a significant effect on the direction of the industry. Brett Robinson discusses the origins and evolution of the strategy genre, its effects on the gaming industry, and its future.

Like all large, well-established entities, the strategy genre arose from humble beginnings. In 1991, an American company released a title that irreversibly altered the very essence of the gaming industry. That company was Westwood Studios, a relatively obscure Las Vegas development studio staffed by a few dedicated individuals; that game was *Dune II*.

*Dune II* single-handedly revolutionised the gaming industry in a way matched by very few titles in the succeeding eight years. Prior to its release, a sizeable proportion of PC games were based on popular arcade and console hits, and titles like Maxis' *Sim City* ruled the strategy roost. *Dune II* wowed both the press and public alike with its sumptuous visuals, engaging plot and highly addictive gameplay. Every aspect of the game screamed "quality", from the cinematic intro to the in-game interface. The marked differences between the Atreides, Harkonnen and Ordos factions lent tremendous variety to the types of units and buildings on offer. Almost overnight, *Dune II* became the game to own and, unfortunately, became one of the most widely pirated games of that era.



(top) *Dune II*. (above) The venerable *Warcraft*.

Nevertheless, *Dune II* attained classic status, and remained on many a gamer's hard drive for several years, apt testament to its long term value and almost universal appeal.

### A finely crafted war

1991 was also the year that Microprose's *Civilization* saw the light of day. The man (many would say "genius") behind the game, Sid Meier, had already made a name for himself the previous year with the hugely popular *Railroad Tycoon*. In that very same year, Maxis expanded on its Sim line of products with dubious games like *Sim Ant*. In 1993, Bullfrog released their highly acclaimed game, *Syndicate*. As the first squad-based action/strategy game, *Syndicate* remained in a class of its own for several years.

Signalling the end of a three-year real-time strategy (RTS) game drought, the release in 1994 of *Warcraft* from Blizzard brought to an end the comfortable monopoly enjoyed by Westwood. *Warcraft*'s medieval fantasy theme attracted those who preferred to eschew high tech gadgetry for ye olde style empire







(above) Warcraft 2. (right) Command & Conquer.

► construction. Combat involving impossibly large swords, magic and ugly green orcs was a concept swiftly adopted by thousands of gamers eager for a different take on the gameplay style established by Dune II. Warcraft's success established Blizzard Entertainment as a force to be reckoned with. It also served as a less than subtle warning that Westwood's hold on the RTS game genre was tenuous at best.

### Let the battle commence

In a high water mark of strategy gaming, 1995 saw the release of Westwood's Command & Conquer, and Blizzard's Warcraft II. The almost subdued rivalry that had existed between the two developers exploded into all out war. Fans mobilised behind their preferred title, rallying under the collective banners of either C&C-ers or Warcraft-ians. Anyone claiming neutrality in the matter was shouted down and treated with the contempt they deserved. Those less passionate about the matter labelled such inflexible extremism "The Great C&C/Warcraft II Debate". This was one of the earliest examples of inter-title rivalry, a phenomenon that is today something of a gaming industry institution.

Both C&C and Warcraft II were dramatic improvements on all previous titles. While Warcraft II had the upper hand when it came to visuals, C&C had a pumping soundtrack that sparked cries of "I'm a

mechanical man!" the world over (*Sorry, Brett, but you were the only one - Ed*). Though the debate may never be settled, C&C won the retail battle and was listed in the 1999 Guinness Book of World Records as the "Most Successful Strategy Wargame Ever Created". Many believed that electronic gaming as a whole was entering a Golden Age. Electronic gaming, and in particular PC gaming, had metamorphosed from a pastime enjoyed by an exclusive cabal of devotees, into one more widely accepted by the community at large. This shift in societal attitudes heralded the dawning of an era where electronic gaming was viewed as a legitimate, and more socially acceptable, form of entertainment. Though the PC gaming industry itself was still in its infancy, many corporations were quick to identify the enormous revenue potential. They were equally rapid in capitalising on this increased consumer interest. After the high of 1995, it was inevitable that what was to follow would be a disappointment to many.

### The Clone Age

The overwhelming retail success of titles like Command & Conquer and Warcraft II caused many developers to focus their strategy

game production resources on RTS titles. Unfortunately, the success of those titles also acted as a catalyst for the adoption of a development strategy that still plagues the industry today. Unscrupulous developers envisaged a quick and easy means of generating revenue. It involved what is known in marketing circles as "Product Differentiation", a practice whereby a manufacturer creates a product almost identical to that of its competitors, then modifies the appearance of that product to make it seem unique. Consumers are exposed to this practice on a daily basis, particularly in the fashion and footwear industries. Within the gaming industry, such an insidious and detrimental practice was soon dubbed "cloning". This industry wide phenomenon had, and continues to have, a deleterious effect on the quality of games, to the point where only a minute percentage of all games released contain any element of originality.

The practice of cloning had the most serious repercussions within the strategy and first-person shooter genres. The problem reached a crescendo between 1996 and 1998, when an unprecedented number of C&C clones flooded the market. During this period,

**"Warcraft's success established Blizzard as a force to be reckoned with."**

## Massively Multiplayer!

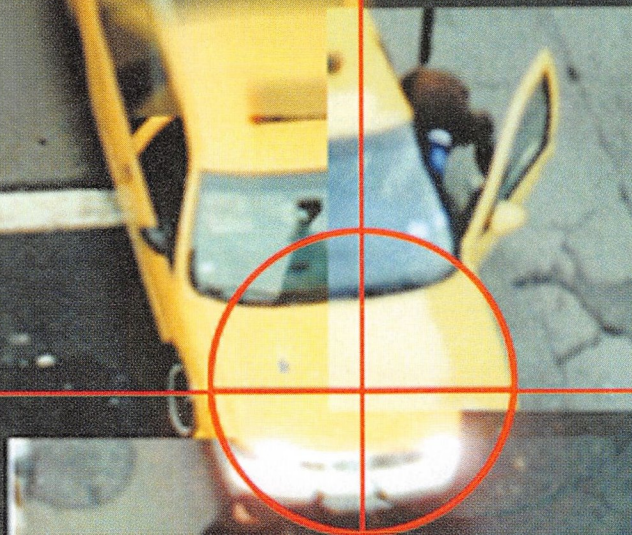
Verant Interactive, the people behind Everquest, recently announced development of the next game in their massively multiplayer series. Sovereign is a 3D online-only strategy title that will combine the negotiations and backstabbing of Diplomacy with the complexity of Civilization and the combat of C&C. Sovereign's games will occur within a persistent world (i.e. players' bases can come under attack while they're offline) and will accommodate up to 500 simultaneous participants. Verant are also taking steps to eliminate the

ubiquitous "tank rush". The game will feature up to ten exploitable resources, and constructing most units will require several types of resources. This will make units more expensive to produce, thus making each individual unit more valuable to the player than in most strategy games. Sovereign will also introduce a class system for skills like espionage. If Verant do it right, Sovereign could be the answer to every strategy gamer's dreams.



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**COMMAND & CONQUER**

**VS**

**WARCRAFT II**



If there is one thing the history of war has constantly reminded us, it's that you should never take into account "the odds". When Blizzard's minions took the infamous RTS Pass to face the numerically (and technologically) advanced Command & Conquer battalion, many predicted that they would suffer a catastrophic defeat. It should have been a slaughter, but somehow Warcraft 2 managed to fend off the initial assault and ultimately hold its own against superior forces.

**WINNER IT'S A TIE!**



The Starcraft medic - you'll need her and once you've finished playing.



► an enormous consumer backlash ensued. Rightfully incensed members of the press, and gamers tired of wasting their hard-earned money on games of questionable quality, rallied against the cloning scourge.

### Back to the future

In 1996, Westwood Studios released their third RTS title, Command & Conquer: Red Alert. Plot wise, Red Alert was touted as the prequel to the original C&C. While it couldn't be considered a clone per se, Red Alert was marred by numerous problems. Within days of its excessively hyped release, it became painfully clear that Westwood had released the game prematurely. There were glaring unit balance problems between the Allied and Soviet factions, and Red Alert's multiplayer code was suspiciously deficient in maintaining an acceptable framerate when more than a handful of units were moving at once. Red Alert's hasty release highlights another widespread problem inherent within the gaming industry - that of releasing incomplete games on schedule, then relying on patches to address bugs and incompatibilities.

The long-awaited Civilization 2 was finally released in mid 1996. While it didn't seem

possible, Civ 2 improved tremendously on its predecessor. The graphics, interface, units, wonders and diplomacy features were all given a major overhaul. The end result was incredible. Civilization 2 received worldwide acclaim, and was (and still is) considered to be one of the greatest strategy games ever made.

### A new force emerges

A year later, in 1997, the lucrative alliance between Brisbane-based developer, Auran, and industry giant, Activision, bore fruit in the form of Dark Reign. Marketing hyperbole from both companies had most people convinced that Dark Reign was to be the next big thing in RTS gaming. The first week of sales yielded promising results, but ultimately Dark Reign failed to live up to expectations. Unit AI was impressive, and being able to set waypoints was a definite plus, yet unfortunately the game offered little else in the way of innovation. Both Activision and Auran immediately went on the defensive, with Auran eventually claiming that Activision was uncooperative and domineering during development. The relationship between the companies eventually reached breaking point, with Auran terminating any future ventures with





(left) Red Alert.  
(top) Dark Reign.  
(middle) Total Annihilation.  
(above) Close Combat 2.

Activision, and Activision walking away with the Dark Reign license.

Remarkably, the Dark Reign debacle had very positive repercussions for the Australian development industry. Auran's dealings with one of the world's largest publishing and distribution companies paved the way for publishing contracts between a multitude of fellow Australian developers, and the likes of Electronic Arts, GT Interactive and others. It also provided inspiration for countless Australian programmers and artists, many of whom started up their own development studios with now-familiar names like Ratbag, Insomnia and Stromlo.

### Year of the Dog

1997 was also a year in which 3D accelerator card ownership boomed. 3dfx enjoyed a virtual monopoly on hardware that, until 1999, was something of an industry standard. First-person shooters and flight sims were the first to support the increasingly popular cards, with racing titles and many others following suit soon after. However, most developers were unwilling to abandon their chief demographic of relatively low-end

PC owners, and continued to provide non-accelerated software mode support. Surprisingly, strategy game developers seemed loath to forge ahead into unknown territory, electing instead to continue producing two-dimensional titles. And then previously unknown developer, Cavedog Entertainment, broke the 2D mould with a startlingly innovative debut title, a little thing called Total Annihilation.

Technically a quasi-3D RTS due to its use of polygonal units overlaying a 2D map, Total Annihilation introduced a number of intriguing new concepts to the genre. Arguably, the most successful of these was the continual availability of new units on the Cavedog web site. This feature, alone, gave the game astounding long term potential. TA also introduced unit queuing, a godsend that enabled players to leave unit construction in the capable hands of the game's AI. This, coupled with an incredible waypoint tasking system, eased the



As everyone knows, war is always won in the R&D department. Whoever wins that race to develop the fastest, the quietest, the most destructive technology will be the side to emerge victorious. Such was the case with the first generation of whatever everyone is still calling the Action/Strategy genre, where Pandemic's Battlezone proved superior to Uprising in all aspects. The Battlezone interface coped admirably with the twin weight of its superbly balanced action and strategy elements, while Uprising struggled to coordinate its forces.

The depth of Pandemic's strategic gambit weakened the Uprising defence with constant bombardment, 3DO's game unable to match the flexibility and resourcefulness of Battlezone's base construction. Thus breached, Uprising fell quickly to the brutal, visceral punch of Battlezone's first-person action. Later, Uprising 2 vanished without a trace, yet Battlezone 2 is one of the year's most eagerly-awaited titles.

**WINNER BATTLEZONE**







## CIVILIZATION 2

VS

## MASTER OF ORION 2



While Sid Meier was putting the finishing touches to his earthbound empire, his colleagues elsewhere at Microprose were readying their starfleets for an invasion. Equipped with remarkably similar gameplay mechanics, interfaces, and even visual presentation, both Civ 2 and MOO 2 dug in for a war of attrition. While the combatants could each count on a legion of support, and recruited countless foot soldiers throughout the duration of the conflict, in the end it came down to one crucial scientific discovery. Whereas the sci-fi research choices in MOO 2 made no sense, the tech tree in Civ 2 was both comprehensible and rewarding. It's no wonder Civ 2 was the first to reach Alpha Centauri.

**WINNER** CIV 2



Battlezone is brilliant - why didn't you buy it?



Myth: The first truly 3D real-time strategy game.

► player workload considerably, allowing them to concentrate on more important matters.

Today, thousands of devotees worldwide continue to play TA with an almost religious fervour - irrefutable evidence of the game's quality. However, most would agree that TA's gameplay dynamics constituted an evolution, as opposed to a revolution. Total Annihilation's 3D units were still bound by the constraints of a 2D environment. TA also had its fair share of flaws, the most obvious of which was its CPU crushing nature; the 100MHz CPU minimum requirements were an absolute farce. Rumours of a patch adding 3dfx support circulated for months, but Cavedog chose not to produce one, instead promising to support 3D accelerators with their next title.

### Hit and miss

In the years since, much effort was expended to lead the strategy game into new territory. Some were successful, while others failed.

Developer, Media Station, attempted to provide a RTS experience that thousands had dreamed of with their first title, Extreme Tactics. The game gave players the chance to design and construct their own units. The concept was admirable, but Media Station failed to pull it off. The end result was a woeful conglomeration of aesthetically appalling units and abysmal gameplay.

Markedly more satisfying were Age of Empires and Close Combat 2, products which proved that Microsoft weren't just masters of sub-standard operating systems. Age of Empires enjoyed a particularly large following, in spite of its less than spectacular graphics. Its groundbreaking gameplay qualified it as a strategy sub-genre unto itself, and spawned a host of inferior clones. Elsewhere, Bullfrog's

Dungeon Keeper also acquired a legion of followers. Playing for the dark side has an almost universal appeal that, in this instance, was compounded by ingenious overall game design.

### Laying siege

Early 1998 saw the first 3D accelerated real-time strategy game hit the market. Bungie Software's Myth: The Fallen Lords deviated from the standard RTS formula more than just graphically; it eliminated resource management completely, and gave the player a limited number of units with which to accomplish mission objectives. This shifted the focus of the gameplay to purely tactical combat, an innovation welcomed with open arms by the strategy community. Myth also incorporated a floating camera perspective that proved tactically invaluable, and visually spectacular.

Starcraft was (finally) released several months later. Blizzard's long-awaited game sold like hotcakes, and was certainly worth the wait. Battles between the Terran, Protoss and Zerg forces raged online and, for several months, few strategy enthusiasts played anything else. It was common knowledge that Blizzard had RTS games down to an art, and Starcraft only strengthened that belief. But, in spite of its undeniably addictive gameplay, Starcraft adhered to the established RTS design ethic.

Around the same time, Microprose wrested the Battletech licence from Activision and developed Mech Commander. Mech Commander's unique take on RTS combat was extremely promising, but proved to be a major disappointment. In the end, numerous infuriating design flaws proved fatal to the industry's first mech-based strategy game.

### Genre infiltration

The distinction between game genres became increasingly blurred with the release of





**Rainbow Six: Arguably the best action/strategy hybrid thus far.**

Battlezone. Combining the best elements of the first-person shooter, action and strategy genres into one frantic, addictive game, Battlezone was also one of the few strategy titles that actually justified the use of 3D units and environments. So, too, did Microsoft's Urban Assault, a game that tasked players with capturing enemy territory in the wake of a nuclear holocaust.

Tom Clancy's company, Red Storm Entertainment, caught everyone off guard with Rainbow Six. Based on the novel of the same name, Rainbow Six was a frighteningly realistic and extremely demanding action/strategy game that almost qualified as a simulation. An integral part of each mission was the Planning Phase, where players used blueprints of buildings to coordinate the

released this year, with Jane's Fleet Command delighting naval Strategy fans with its simulation of naval operations and vessels from over a dozen countries. Conversely, Total Annihilation: Kingdoms was something of a disappointment for the many who had waited with bated breath for its release. Improving little on its predecessor, in terms of both gameplay and framerate, many got the distinct feeling that TA: Kingdoms had been released prematurely.

Westwood once again flexed its Real Time Strategy muscle, finally releasing the next iteration of their Command & Conquer series. The missions in Tiberian Sun are exceptionally well scripted, and its gameplay is almost perfectly balanced. In the hope of partially eliminating the "tank rush" tactic that they had

## "Homeworld is the revolution in strategy that thousands have been waiting for."

movements and attacks of up to 16 team members. Further emphasis will be placed on this Planning Phase in Rainbow Six's sequel, Rogue Spear. Here, it will be possible to concentrate solely on the strategic aspect, programming the movements of team members, then observing them carrying out their orders in the Action Phase.

### Here and now

With many big name strategy games seeing the light of day, 1999 has been an exciting year for strategy gamers. Early this year saw the almost simultaneous release of Civilization: Call to Power and Alpha Centauri. Both are top quality turn-based strategy titles, and no clear winner can be discerned. And the awesome Heroes of Might & Magic III was well worth the wait, employing myriad gameplay, AI and graphical refinements.

Numerous 3D strategy titles were also

unwittingly pioneered with Red Alert, Westwood set construction limitations on the most powerful units. Fortunately, the gambles paid off and, while Tiberian Sun brought very little to the genre in the way of new features, it is a shining (and reassuring) example of the kind of quality titles that Westwood are still capable of producing

### Exploring new frontiers

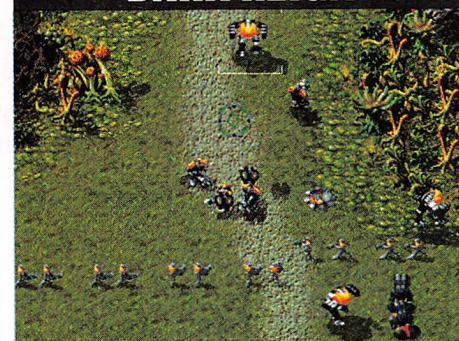
Needing very little in the way of introduction, is Homeworld. This, ladies and gentlemen, is the big one. Homeworld is the revolution in strategy gaming that thousands have been waiting for. The concept behind it, a space-based RTS where units can move in three dimensions, is absolutely ingenious. Developer, Relic Entertainment, performed far beyond expectations and lavished the sort of care and attention to detail that is seen in a scant few titles. Homeworld's revolutionary



**TOTAL ANNIHILATION**

**VS**

**DARK REIGN**



In a monumental fight for strategy genre supremacy, Cavedog flagship, Total Annihilation, battled Auran behemoth, Dark Reign. Total Annihilation's robot-driven attacks were matched blow for blow by Dark Reign's cybrid assaults. In a last ditch attempt to destroy Dark Reign, Total Annihilation deployed thousands of cheap, rapidly constructed units, an underhanded tactic known as a "K-bot rush". However, TA's final act of desperation was hampered by its own lack of 3D accelerator support; its K-bot swarm ground to a halt mere metres from Dark Reign's fortification, a victim of its own poor framerate. Dark Reign was, however, in no condition to retaliate, having suffered heavy casualties as a result of infighting between its Commanders-in-Chief. At the cessation of hostilities, neither title emerged victorious, but judges awarded TA the win on a technicality. Total Annihilation went on to enjoy many months of sustained multiplayer glory, while Dark Reign faded into obscurity.

**WINNER**

**TA**



**Mech Commander's design flaws let it down.**

PCP





(above) Civ: Call To Power. (top right) Alpha Centauri. (bottom right) Tiberian Sun.

► gameplay, jaw-dropping, awe-inspiring visuals and superlative plot will undoubtedly see it join the ranks of C&C and TA as one of the greatest real-time strategy games ever.

Strategy gamers still reeling from the masterpiece that is Homeworld have much to look forward to in the next few years. Peter Molyneux, creator of many of Bullfrog's greatest efforts, is the mastermind behind Lionhead Studios' Black & White, yet another game set to revolutionise the strategy genre. While that action/strategy borderline will be tested even further when Planet Moon Studios finally get round to releasing Giants: Citizen Kabuto.

### The future is now

The sort of games that the strategy genre will yield several years down the track is open to almost limitless speculation. The continual merging of once clearly defined genres will probably see pure strategy titles posted on the Endangered Species list. Research advances in Neural Net AI will ensure that the single player component of most strategy games won't be abandoned. However,

we'll probably see far more emphasis on the multiplayer aspect. Online role-playing games like Everquest and Ultima Online, and mass multiplayer action games such as Starsiege: Tribes and Team Fortress, are currently all the rage. Several strategy game developers are following suit with similarly structured titles. Their success, however, will be determined by the intelligence of their design. Westwood's early 1998 attempt at creating an online-only strategy game was less than successful. Sadly, the concept behind C&C: Sole Survivor was flawed from the beginning, and the finished product was a boring click-fest with ugly graphics and fundamentally flawed gameplay. Westwood have learned from their mistake and it's doubtful that similar games will be released in the future.

With technology advancing at an exponential rate, it will be very interesting to see what

strategy gaming will be like in a decade. The humble mouse, the strategy gamer's weapon of choice, may soon be superseded by more effective forms of interaction between man and machine. Word processor documents can now be composed using verbal commands, making it conceivable that some games may soon be played in the same manner. Neural interfaces are also the subject of intense research and experimentation. These obviously have enormous medical, social and military implications, but there will undoubtedly be countless entertainment applications as well. What will strategy gaming be like in twenty years? The possibilities are almost limitless. Only one thing is for certain. In an ever-expanding industry that has already surpassed the movie industry in scope, strategy gaming, and gaming in general, can only get bigger and better. ■

**“...advances in Neural Net AI will ensure that the single player component of most strategy games won't be abandoned.”**

## The Ultimate Strategy Game?

My dream is to play a persistent, online-only, space-based strategy game combining the construction elements of Sim City, the diplomatic negotiations of Alpha Centauri and the combat of Homeworld. The game would be played within small Sectors made up of several planets. Star Systems would be made up of several Sectors, with the Galaxy comprised of thousands of Star Systems. Players would colonise their chosen Sectors, generating revenue from taxation and the refining of resources. Revenue could be spent on the expansion of colonies, expansion into neighbouring Sectors or on offensive and defensive spacecraft. Uninhabited Sectors could be freely colonised, but the cost of doing so would be high. Inhabited sectors would have to be captured by force in enormous, Homeworld-esque, real-time space battles.

Players would be encouraged to form Sector and System trade and military alliances, with the Galaxy eventually polarising into hundreds of factions. The factions would then form additional

alliances, fighting each other for territorial and Galactic dominance. It would be entirely possible for players to engage in exclusively peaceful pursuits, relying on allies or Mercenaries for defence. Players' chosen systems of government would reflect their emphasis on peaceful or militaristic practices. Colonisation of Sectors would take many hours, with colonisation of Systems taking even longer. Players unable to spend the time colonising Sectors would have the option of using their initial monetary allocation to purchase spacecraft, performing Mercenary duties for other players in order to earn money. In addition to vast numbers of colonies, the Galaxy would be filled with nomadic Mercenary fleets. These fleets could also choose to form their own alliances, or become pirates. Like online RPGs, players who devote the most time to the game would occupy the most territory, and possess the most powerful fleets.

It would be called Expansionism and it'll be fantastic. In my dreams, anyway.



## Serious Gaming Fun



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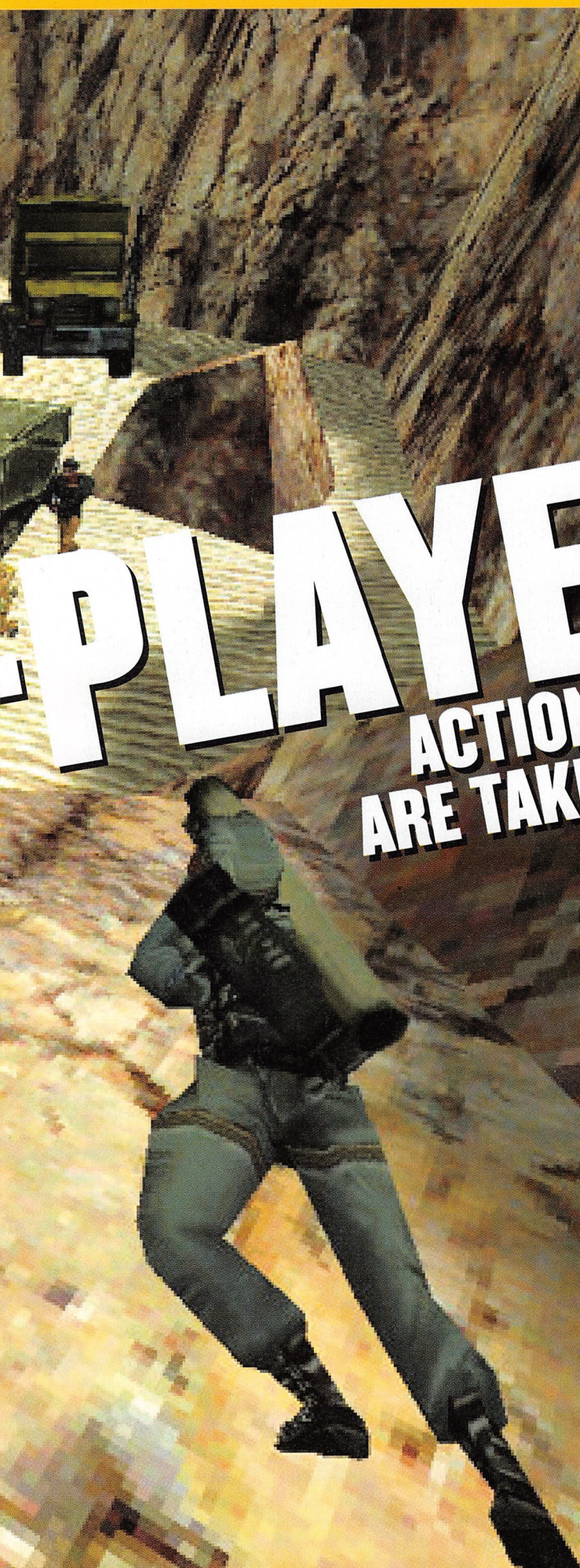
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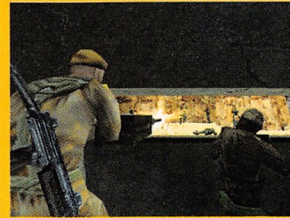
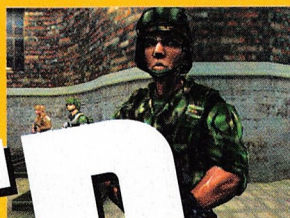
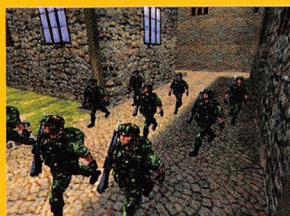
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# PLAYER

## ACTION GAMES ARE TAKING OVER



As you run the gauntlet across no-man's-land, Elih Brading will cover your back from his sniper's post...

**\*** In 1996 an entire race was spawned thanks to the efforts of one game. An online community formed that was so expansive it provided a baseline for the progression and driving force behind 3D action title development. That game was none other than id software's Quake. Through the genius of John Carmack, Quake provided the two necessary items for market sustainment: stability and expandability.

While the id team started construction on Quake 2, Carmack converged with his keyboard to create Quakeworld, a free add-on that showed the world the power, stability and capabilities of the Internet as an online games server. Through Carmack's open-source attitude, the online community opened up with modifications such as Capture the Flag (CTF) and Rocket Arena (RA) being the first popular developments off the ranks.

Though CTF was the first accepted teamplay variant, it was the release of Team Fortress that generated such a cult following among the community. TF was so close to a total conversion in regards to gameplay mechanics that it filled the niche between strategy and action. It was perhaps one of the first attempts at uniting two diverse genres, certainly one of the most successful.

With the New Year fast approaching, there are four teamplay titles on the horizon, all of which will appeal to the squad-centred combat fan and all of which look unbelievable.

## TEAM FORTRESS 2: BROTHERHOOD OF ARMS

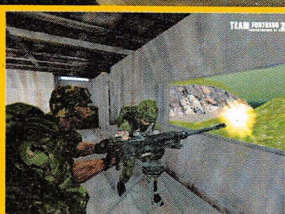
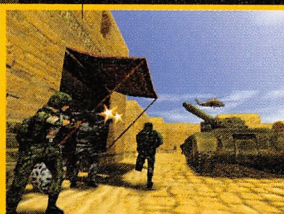
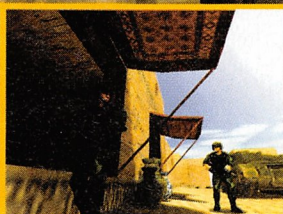
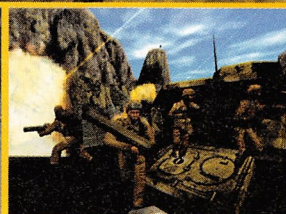
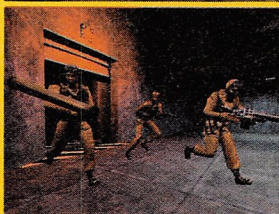
The classic returns, this time as a stand-alone project frothing with funky new features, compiled and conducted as an addictive, co-operative deathmatch experience.

### DETAILS

- **Developer:** Valve
- **Publisher:** Sierra
- **Due:** Dec '99

Valve Software's Half-Life took the world by storm through its innovative AI, fantastic level design, detailed skeletal character animation system, real-world weaponry, and for the simple fact that it had an engaging storyline, an area often overlooked by action game developers. With accomplished success in singleplayer, Valve have focused their efforts on conquering the new territory of squad-based multiplayer gaming. ►





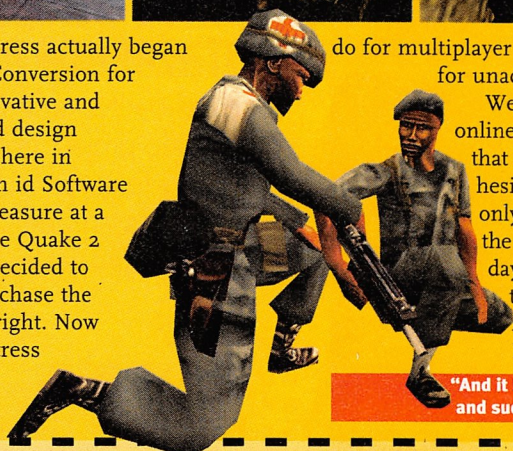
► Team Fortress actually began life as a Total Conversion for Quake, its innovative and cleverly-realised design produced right here in Australia. When id Software expressed displeasure at a sequel using the Quake 2 engine, Valve decided to step in and purchase the technology outright. Now with Team Fortress 2, Valve are attempting to

do for multiplayer gaming what Half-Life did for unaccompanied play.

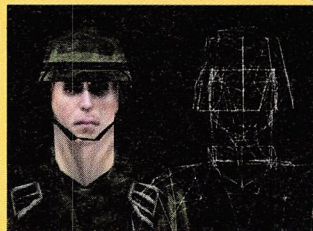
Well aware of the rigours of online play, Valve understand that oftentimes people are hesitant to jump onto a server, only to get owned, and have the cool online name they took days to think up get rubbed in the dirt. Following the footsteps founded by Half-Life, to be included in TF2

are training missions and computer controlled bots to aid in your training. With artificial intelligence that's even more flexible than what was seen in Half-Life, Team Fortress 2 is sure to make an impact with even the hardcore single-player fans through its class-based system and player varieties.

Teamplay in computer gaming is all too often stereotyped by the safety-in-numbers cliché, and though a raw number count will help in Team Fortress, the developers are taking measures to ensure that the game is centred around class management. Some class combinations will work more effectively than ►



"And it bit me on the arse. Be a mate and suck out the poison..."



Lowest LOD



Highest LOD

## MRM TECHNOLOGY

Team Fortress 2 will support Intel's MRM (Multi-Resolution Mesh), meaning that TF2 will be able to have more models on screen with optimal viewing performance. The shot shows the LOD (Level of Detail) on the game's soldiers. The polygon count on each model is scaled down as their proximity increases. In addition to MRM, the Team Fortress 2 engine sports skeletal-parametric animation, advanced explosions, and realistic smoke effects, as well as allowing for a diverse range of driveable vehicles such as jeeps, tanks and helicopters.



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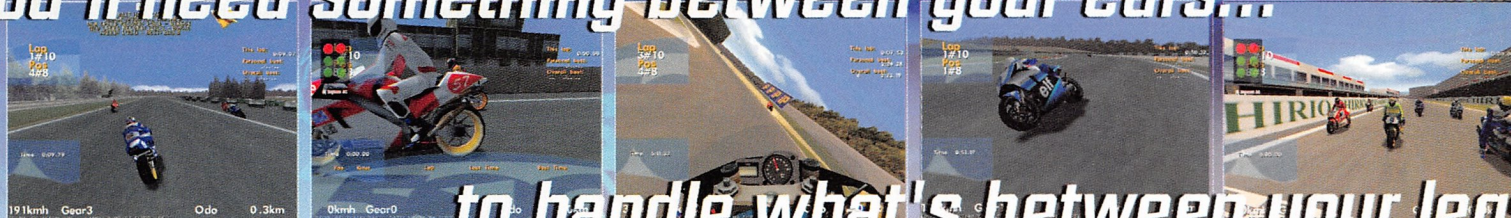
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**"This game gave me the biggest adrenaline rush I've ever had without hitting 180 mph on a real track."**

Kenny Roberts Jr. Team Suzuki



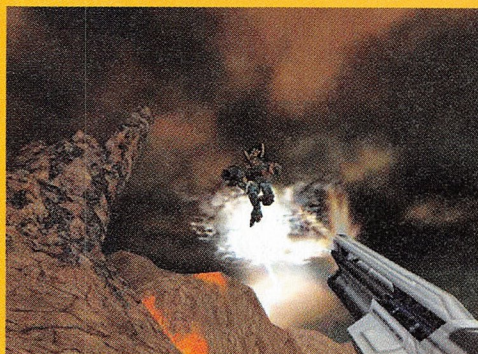
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**MICRO PROSE**

CD-ROM



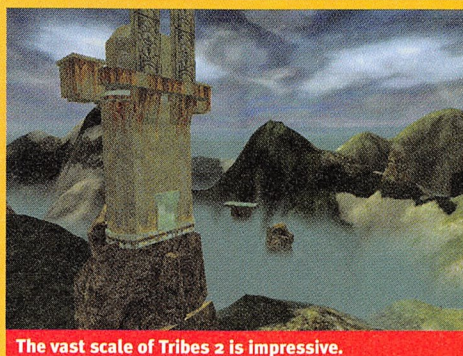
**"...your teammates are watching your back as carefully as you're watching theirs."**



► others, and travelling in squads of three-four seems the most logical choice for prepared battles. Building upon this premise, the mounted weaponry on offer will work with greater accuracy and efficiency if there are two players controlling it - one to feed in the ammunition while the other pulls the trigger.

Victory will require unison with your fellow teammates. According to Valve, "you'll go into battle as part of a cohesive squad of fellow warriors all set on the same goal, whether it's storming a beach, demolishing a bridge or escorting a VIP to safety. And you'll do it with the knowledge that your teammates are watching your back as carefully as you're watching theirs."

Teamplay is all about effective communication and Valve plan to support active voice communication for some classes in the game. In addition, a useful program similar to ICQ will allow your opponents and teammates to remain on a contact list, showing you when and which server they're playing on.



The vast scale of Tribes 2 is impressive.

A squad-based team warfare game being created by the best in the first-person action industry seems assured of success, though the upcoming competition is sure to keep Valve on their toes. Team Fortress 2 looks to be all that its developers have promised; as more and more multiplayer games deviate from the traditional deathmatch arena style, Valve seem to be taking a logical step in the succession and shaping of a genre.

## TRIBES EXTREME

\* Upon its release, Starsiege: Tribes became an instant classic - and rightly so. After all, it combined the right gameplay elements, physics balance and teamplay combinations and was encased by a powerful, flexible game engine that was capable of rendering vast outdoor vistas and complex indoor environments with a seamless transition between the two.

Negating any single-player option, the epicentre of Starsiege has indeed been its shining multiplayer capabilities. Tribes Extreme is set to fill the loophole created by its predecessor through implementing features such as: computer controlled opponents (and teammates); equally balanced maps that offer identical strategic advantage; intuitive beginner tutorials and advanced training missions; and a new multiplayer campaign.

However, you are not entirely alone in this single-player environment; training missions can guide you through the basics of teamplay, and are designed to help new players quickly become accustomed to the rigours of online combat. AI-controlled teammates can be assigned specific roles (such as sniping, scouting, defence and various other abilities) to ensure that you'll be getting the most out of your squad members.

Perhaps the most interesting game mode gives players an opportunity to join and fight against the AI, the possibility for building clan communication and teamplay skills are endless. Dynamix are keen to show the world that it's "fun and easy to be an online warrior."

However, it should be clarified that Tribes Extreme is an add-on rather than an entirely new game. With Tribes 2 due out next year, you have to wonder why Dynamix are developing an add-on and not devoting their entire team to the advancement of Tribes 2. It seems as though Extreme is purely a lead-up to the sequel, an attempt to rope in the single-player community as well as the hardcore online fans. It is, of course, also likely to work. After all, adding a single-player component to one of the most popular online games, publicity-wise at least, is a guaranteed winner.

## TRIBES 2

Sparse outdoor environments stretch as far as the eye can see, realistic explosions and effects set in a distant world - bring on this stellar sequel!

### DETAILS

- **Developer:** Dynamix
- **Publisher:** Sierra
- **Due:** 2nd Qtr 2000

\* While a small proportion of the Dynamix development team put the final touches on Tribes Extreme, many employees are immersed in the development of the proper sequel to Starsiege. Tribes 2 plans to stick to the popular formula established by the original, but will contain enough additions, environment changes and new features to warrant significant attention.

Adding to the Newblood, Children Of The Phoenix, Starwolf and Diamond Sword classes are the Bioderms, a new tribe of malevolent horned monsters who pack a punch with a new diverse selection of weaponry. Supporting this new tribe is a





The spiffy new 3D engine will allow for some amazingly detailed environments.

rumoured set of vehicles including hovercrafts and dune-buggies, both packed with player-operated machinegun turrets.

Although Tribes already contains beautifully rendered outdoor environments, being based on a new and vastly improved engine, the level of detail in Tribes 2 will be astounding. Realistic surroundings and geographical landforms will immerse the player in a world surrounded by everything from rolling hills and creek crossings to randomised landmarks and sheer cliff faces.

Incorporated into the new engine are realistic aqua environments from puddles and ponds to full-sized lakes - all 3D modelled with reflective surfaces that leave a shimmering trail

of sunshine along the waterline. Water isn't there purely for its graphical beauty of course; liquids will affect the gameplay, as some weapons won't operate while immersed, whereas others may work more efficiently.

Swimming can add considerable tactical advantage, especially in locations where bases lie on the edge of expansive lakes and river systems. Players can remain submerged until a team commander gives the order; imagine the reaction from the defenceless opposition as twenty freedom fighters arise from the shallow depths of the lakes murky waters!

To accommodate the advanced engine, Dynamix have seen fit to include computer-

controlled opponents and teammates to add to the multiplayer training regime. Included purely as practice drones, the bots are operated through simple key presses, allowing for functions such as attack, defend, follow, stand ground, charge, patrol and guard via sophisticated artificial intelligence and architectural routines.

As many agree, singleplayer is just a training ground for the real thing and Tribes 2 follows its forefathers with highly stable networking and squad-based deathmatch action. With strong community-based elements, Tribes 2 could be the gem in the stone of mass multiplayer action.





## HALO

Halo looks set to make its mark as the game of the new millennium and the messiah of the FPS genre.

### DETAILS

■ **Developer:** Bungie  
 ■ **Publisher:** Bungie/Take2  
 ■ **Due:** 3rd Qtr 2000

\* Unveiled to a select few in an E3 amphitheatre under a stringent NDA (Non-Disclosure Agreement), game journalists were sworn to secrecy concerning Bungie's third person squad-based action shooter HALO. First made public during an Apple keynote address at the MacWorld Expo in New York (in a manner similar to that in which John Carmack first revealed footage from Quake 3: Arena), Halo is a squad-orientated cooperative multiplayer game which employs uninterrupted gameplay, beautifully rendered outdoor environments, realistic in-game physics and comprehensive character animation.

Bungie have since elaborated on the game's premise: "In the distant future, your game character is a military recon unit of the human race's fledgling planetary empire. Pursued by alien warships to a massive and ancient ring

construct deep in the void, the player must single-handedly improvise a guerrilla war over land, sea and air, using the arsenals and vehicles of three distinct cultures."

Though it sounds like only a small deviation from the typical alien vs humans setup, Bungie clearly have the talent to avoid the repetitive themes and cumbersome features resident in many of the current titles. "There have been countless games on this theme, but few of them have the depth of story, detail or originality that you would find in a good sci-fi novel," they argue. "We're going to write this story."

Bungie intend to "make the definitive game of conflict between the human race and an alien civilisation." Judging by the current feature list, these goals certainly seem well within their grasp: "Using everything from composite swords to a god-from-above orbital bombardment device, driving everything from giant tanks to agile combat aircraft, players wage intense warfare over and under the surface of this world."

The engine drives the game, and the game drives the engine - take one look at HALO and you'll realise the boundaries are limitless. One

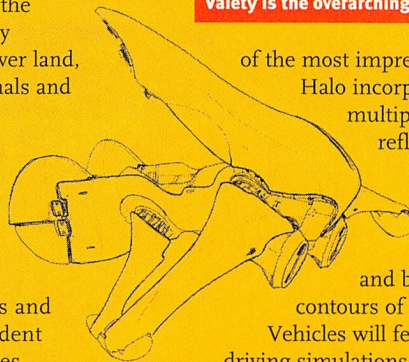
Variety is the overarching design ethic for Halo.

of the most impressive 3D engines to date, Halo incorporates features such as: multipass texturing; per-pixel reflection rendering; deformable terrain; volumetric lighting; and shadows that emulate the game entities, twisting and bending to conform to the contours of the rolling hills.

Vehicles will feature physics that most driving simulations can only imagine. For example, the independent four-wheel suspension will work overtime as a buggy shoots over the 3D terrain at high speed, kicking up dirt and grass and leaving tyre tracks embedded as it accelerates into the distance.

Perhaps the most impressive feature of this game is that the technique of continual data streaming should mean there are no pauses in-between levels or play areas. Bungie stating that although Half-Life came close, there will be absolutely no breaks in the game and no gaps or voids in the gameplay.

Although there's still at least one more year of development, if Halo lives up to the features promised and the present graphical abilities on display in the technology demo are practical, Halo surely will be the strongest contender for game of the year. ■





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# BATTLEZONE 2

Look, it's really nothing at all like the ancient arcade game, okay?

## DETAILS

- **Genre:** Action/Strategy
- **Players:** 1-Multi
- **Developer:** Pandemic
- **Publisher:** Activision
- **Due:** 4th Qtr '99

\* There are some games, regardless of their quality, whose success comes as a huge surprise: Rollercoaster Tycoon, for instance - who would have imagined that what is essentially a business simulation could prove so popular with the mass market? Myst is another prime example - how such a dull, lifeless, and boring experience could be the best-selling computer game of all time is something quite unfathomable.

Conversely, there are other games - great games -

whose inability to sell in the quantity they deserve remains a mystery. Despite garnering glowing press coverage, receiving excellent review scores, and stimulating warm word-of-mouth praise, they somehow manage to stall in retail. It's a baffling situation.

Battlezone was one such title.

## Add two genres and stir

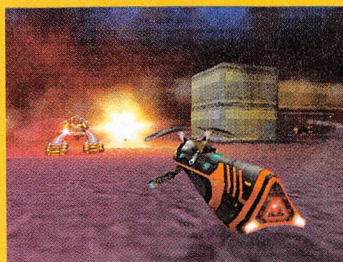
Displaying a commendable amount of faith in the gameplay strength inherent in the original, despite its lack of sales success, Pandemic have chosen not to alter the formula too much for this sequel. It remains at heart an attempt to meld together the best

on offer in both the first-person action and real-time strategy genres. Like any other RTS title, you command the establishment of a base of operations, ensuring an efficient supply line and overseeing the construction of various military units, before marching off to war against your bitter foe. What separates both Battlezone games from the rest is the fact that you're stationed in the midst of the battlefield itself; you're out there giving orders in the heat of the

action, marshalling your forces on the fly and lining up the enemy in your crosshair.

## Tastier visuals

After spending some time with the most recent Battlezone 2 build, it's fair to say that Pandemic appear to have recaptured the same intense gaming experience, one that engages the mind and itches the trigger finger. Most noticeable among the myriad alterations and enhancements the sequel has



These exterior shots are representative of the exciting look of the game.





undergone is the revamped graphics engine. One feature very much lacking in last year's game was terrain detail; much of the landscape unfortunately was limited to undulating, but barren, hills and valleys. In stark contrast, this time the very first mission is situated within a dank, fuggy swamp littered with trees and marshy pools, while nearby lie the dilapidated ruins of a now defunct base. Coloured in murky greens and browns, it's an environment that just (literally) oozes character.

### Kill the beasties

Animals now wander about the world, their task to terrorise the player when he decides to venture outside his chosen vehicle. On foot you're less likely to attract the enemy's attention, but you're also vulnerable to attacks from the predatory local fauna. I found it a little disconcerting that the controls for walking responded in much the same way, albeit significantly slower, as when piloting a vehicle. Hopefully this will



Airborne units make a welcome appearance in this sequel.



No real-time strategy would be complete without a few mechs.

**"...you're vulnerable to attacks from the predatory local fauna."**

change in a later version of the game. Otherwise, the famed Battlezone interface remains relatively untouched; as one of the original game's real strengths, this is undoubtedly a good thing.

### Live and learn

Elsewhere, a more fundamental improvement to the gameplay arrives in the shape of the ability of units to gain experience. They start life with a fairly elementary grasp of AI and thus need to be lead by the hand. Once you have successfully guided them through a few missions, however, somewhat more complex skills and techniques - such as

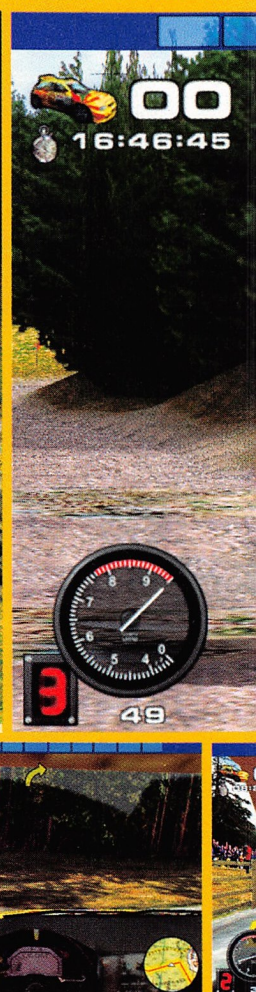
strafing and knowing which weapon is appropriate for the job at hand - will become second nature for your veteran wingmen. And, although Pandemic have made crucial progress in the area of AI, those who still prefer the multiplayer options will find them similarly enhanced. Taking a cue from the likes of Tribes, a greater emphasis is placed upon cooperative team play.

Through striving to improve upon the original formula, rather than changing the nature of the game to suit current fads, Battlezone 2 is shaping up to attain the kind of commercial success that eluded it first time around. ■

David Wildgoose



15:10:86



Are you relaxing Sunday drive in the country...

# RALLY CHAMP

## DETAILS

- Genre: Rally Sim
- Players: 1-8
- Developer: Magnetic Fields
- Publisher: Actualize
- Due: Dec '99

\* First Network Q RAC Rally Championship, then International Rally Championship and now Rally Championship, one can only assume the guys at Magnetic Fields will simply call their next title Rally. As the names get shorter though, the sims get better. Rally Championship is certainly promising to deliver what all of

us motor simulation freaks thrive on: total immersion.

## Hooning with style

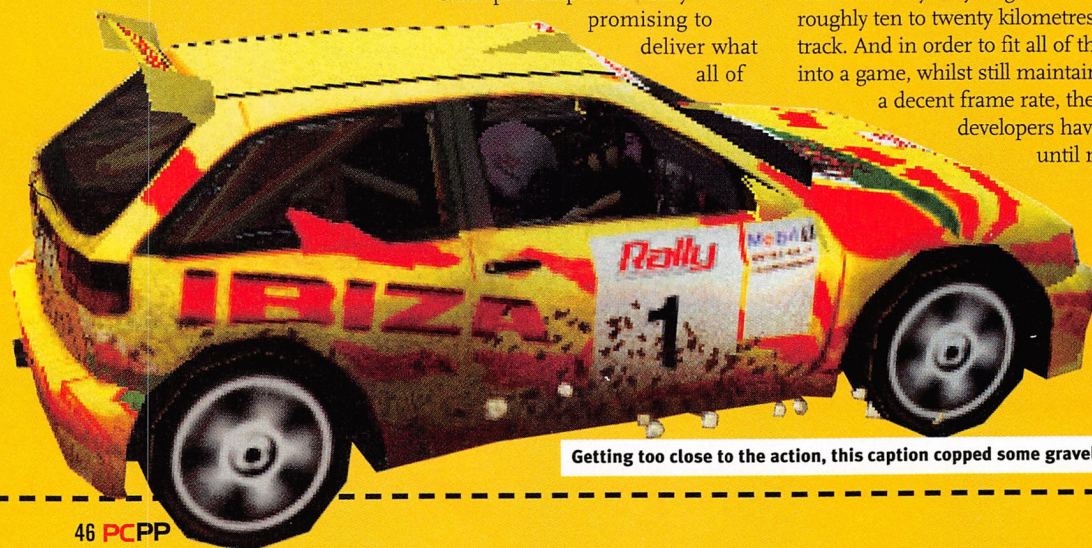
At first glance, all motor sporting sims are judged on their visuals, and sadly, many rally titles of the past seemed to fail in this area. This was due mostly to the fact that many rally stages consist of roughly ten to twenty kilometres of track. And in order to fit all of this into a game, whilst still maintaining a decent frame rate, the developers have until now

been forced to resort to blocky, flat, repetitive and in general unrealistic scenery.

Luckily, we now live in an age of Voodoo 3, TNT2 and powerful CPUs, all which make personal computers of yester-year look like overpriced calculators at best. Magnetic Fields have exploited these advancements in PC technology to the fullest with Rally Championship. Gorgeous photo-realistic scenery screams past while your car jumps and bounces off wonderfully sculptured terrain. When your co-driver warns you of a ditch or crest in the road, take heed - he is likely referring to a 20ft monster that will flip you head over heels, if you fail to slow down (trust me here; I achieved more flips in two seconds than an Olympic diver!)

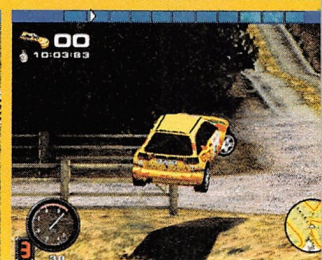
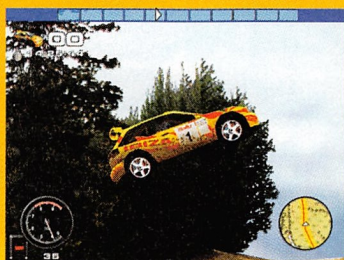
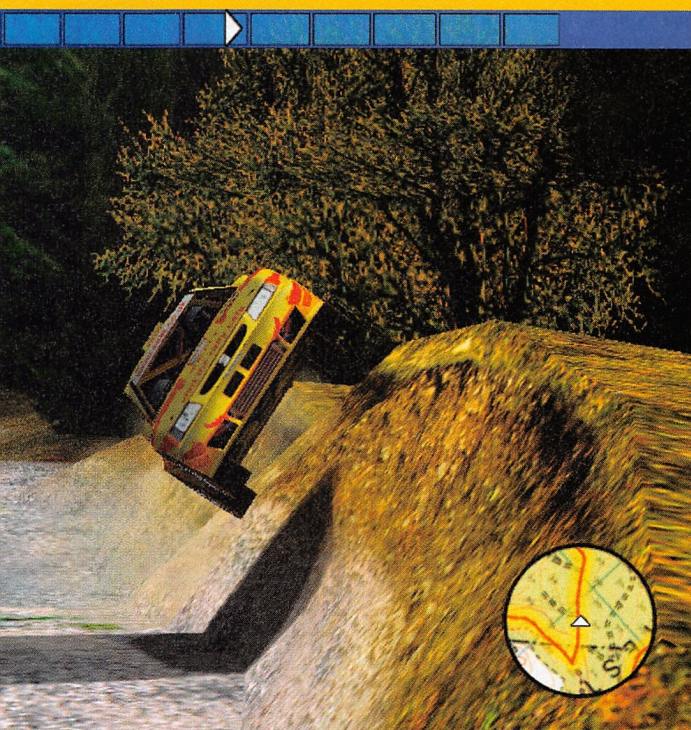
## Independent 4W suspension

Rally Championship offers



Getting too close to the action, this caption copped some gravel.





# IONSHIP 2000

twenty realistically modelled vehicles, more than any other game of its type. And judging by the SEAT Ibiza NFO2 featured in this early version, we shan't be disappointed. From an outside perspective the vehicle is superb. Real-time lighting effects and chrome rendering give that realistic touch, as does healthy doses of dirt and mud splattered all over the chassis by the end of the stage. From the right angle, you can see the driver steering and adjusting his body as he throws the car around the track. For a real treat, switch to chase view, and witness trackside spectators being covered in gravel and mud as they watch your vehicle slide by.

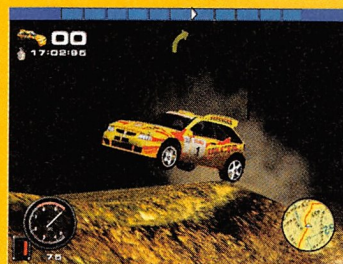
Magnetic Fields have stated that the physics model will include independent four-wheel suspension, tumbling, collision, jumping and damage routines. The demo however, only supports

**"This title is definitely shaping up to knock Colin McRae Rally of its pedestal..."**

keyboard control, making it very difficult to come to any conclusions. But from what we've seen, they have captured it rather nicely. Keyboard or not, misjudging a corner can very easily lead to flipping the car in true rally-like fashion.

## Immersive

The icing on the top of this already sky-high cake is the audio. Sampled from real-life effects, you can hear everything from the pop of the turbo shutting down, to that sickening crunch as the vehicle ploughs into a tree at full tilt. Listening to a cow moo, or the spectators cheer and applaud when you drive by, really adds to that feeling of actually being there.



One day Ed will learn that you go faster with all four wheels on the road.



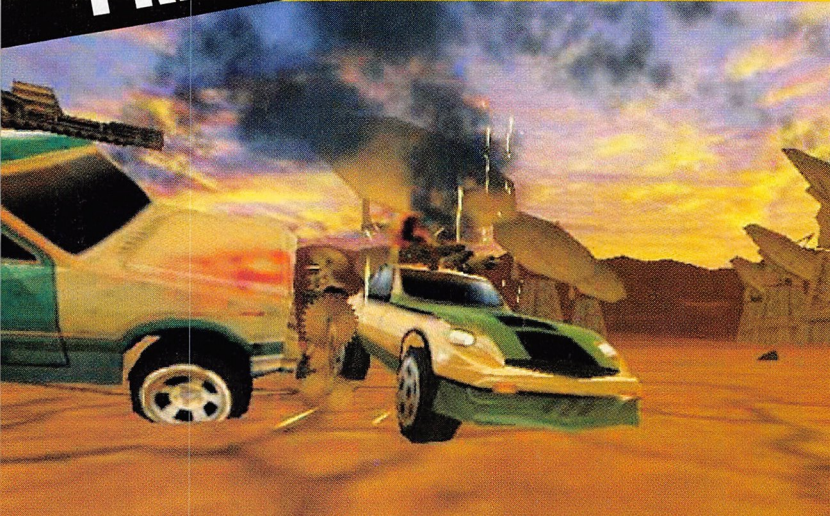
The minimum spec for the game is a Pentium 200 with a Voodoo 1 card, but to achieve that magical effect you're going to want a PII 300MHz with a Voodoo 2. There will also be support for all 3D, AGP, 24 bit, AMD K6-2, leading sound cards and control devices.

All in all, Rally Championship

2000 is set to be an immersive, thoroughly enjoyable experience and is the closest thing that many of us will ever come to actually jumping in the real thing. This title is definitely shaping up to knock Colin McRae Rally off its pedestal, and set the new benchmark for the rally genre. ■

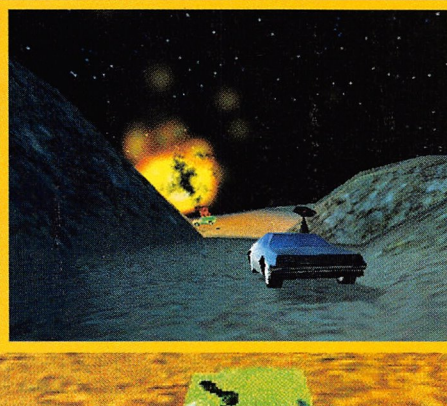
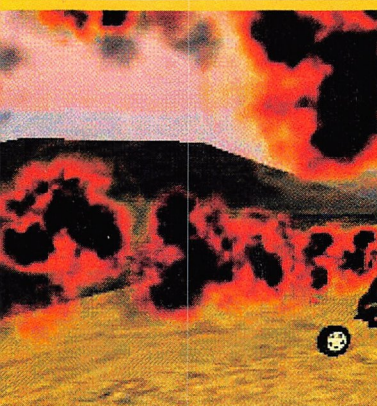
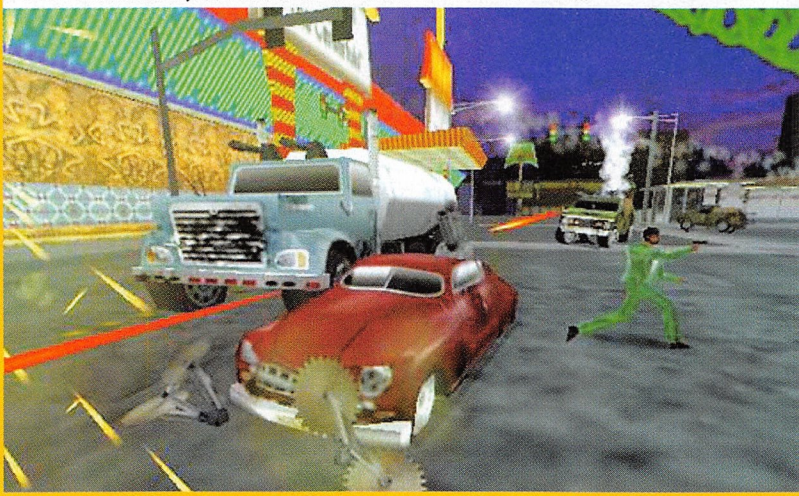
Ed Fox





"She was working as a waitress in a cocktail bar..."

"This is Planet Earth, ba ba-ba ba-ba ba-ba... this is Planet Earth..."



# INTERSTATE '82

It's more spunky than funky, and cooler than ever.

## DETAILS

- **Genre:** Driving action
- **Players:** 1-TBA
- **Developer:** Pandemic
- **Publisher:** Activision
- **Due:** 4th Qtr '99

\* Perhaps the greatest tragedy behind the poor response of gamers to Interstate '76 was that the underneath all the shtick and schmooze of the seventies-flavoured presentation, a damn enjoyable action game lay ready and waiting. Understandably so; if retro just wasn't your thing, it was proportionately difficult to get past the Mod Squad-influenced focus and into the gameplay.

So there's just one cutting question regarding this all-important sequel: has the Interstate series a better chance at survival being an afro-free zone?

## Blow-wave

If New Wave is something that you remember fondly, or at least,

can appreciate, then indeed it has. However, you don't actually need to have any fascination with extinguished pop culture to enjoy what Pandemic have to offer with Interstate '82. They've gone back to the drawing board and channeled all their efforts into creating a far more engaging action driving game than their first effort. That's not to say that I'82 will be bereft of any bouffant charm though. Although their threads may have changed, the Interstate gang (all present, with a couple of new and notable additions) are back and still fully capable of baffling you silly with a unique command of street speak.

## Kamikaze crooks

The beta version we played allowed us to hoon the neon-infested streets of an alternative Las Vegas style city. Surprisingly, the enemy vehicles used a highly top-secret combat technique consisting of colliding head-on

with buildings to prevent us from completing our mission objectives. While it's obvious that the AI still requires some fine-tuning, this stunning display of cunning did reveal the detailed physics engine; there's something intrinsically amusing about a lone hub cap rolling off towards the sunset.

Although the heavily modified Heavy Gear 2 engine managed to entice us with its use of coloured lighting and impressive particle effects, especially in the Las Vegas state, our attention lay elsewhere. We'd caught wind of action hotting up in a nearby shopping centre. The promise of a Blues Brothers influenced car chase through the middle of a mall was enough to have us squealing in excitement. Indeed, much of the game promises to break away from the tedium of driving about dull and flat landscapes and into more challenging arenas. Interstate '82 will also call on subterranean mine

shaft navigational skills and ability to negotiate, of all things, mountain forests and sewerage tunnels (wha?). Even subway tubes won't be able to escape your terrible driving.

The most promising feature of I'82 however, is the ability to leave the confines of your vehicle and attempt the mission on foot. Not only does it give players a welcome break from driving combat, it should allow for some new, downright dirty tactics to be employed. If your vehicle is taking too much damage, it's refreshing to know that car-jacking is now a rewarded option.

## We are D-e-v-o!

Interstate '82 is due soon and it seems not even an eighties influence will hold it back this time. We just can't wait to have a listen to the new tracks that New Wave superstars Devo have composed exclusively for the game. Hey, we're serious! ■

March Stepnik



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# RALLY

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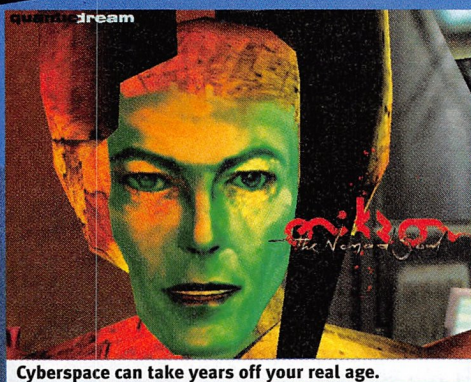
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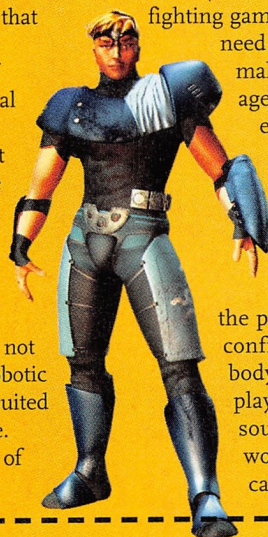
# THE NOMAD SOUL

No wisecracks about the French this time, see?

## DETAILS

■ **Genre:** Action/Adventure  
 ■ **Players:** 1  
 ■ **Developer:** Quantic Dream  
 ■ **Publisher:** Eidos  
 ■ **Due:** 4th Qtr '99

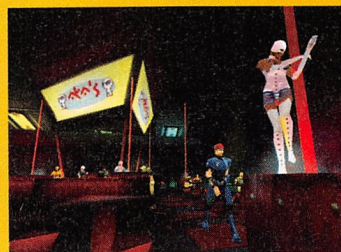
\* Previously known by the rather overly oblique name Omikron, Quantic Dream's existential science fiction epic has since assumed the equally cryptic - if somewhat more evocative - title of The Nomad Soul. The reasons for the change, I suspect, are twofold: one, it was felt that The Nomad Soul better conveyed the themes of reincarnation and eternal being present in the game; and, two, it's (not at all) coincidentally the title of the David Bowie song used on the soundtrack. Speaking of the latter, I've heard the track in question, and it's really not too bad; its eerie, bio-robotic strains certainly seem suited to the game's ambience. You'll be hearing more of it, let me assure you.



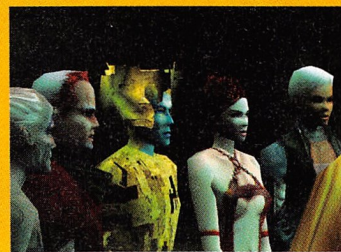
## It's the Matrix again

Not content with authoring the musical score, The Man Who Fell To Earth also plays a character in the game. Bowie appears as Boz, a computer hacker who has finally achieved what he had always wanted: to become a part of the matrix. Now known as the 'Rider', Boz enjoys a virtual existence within the dazzling neon zeroes and ones of cyberspace. The lead character, Kay'l, is an investigative agent for the Omikron Security Forces (and if this was a Japanese fighting game, you would also need to know that Kay'l is male, thirty years of age, six foot tall, weighs eighty kilograms, and - of course - has the blood type K-).

However, highlighting the most fascinating gameplay element, the player is not strictly confined to the physical body Kay'l, and instead plays the role of his soul. This concept works in the game by causing your soul,



The world is well-populated.

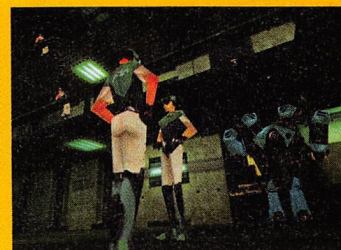


Quick! Call the fashion police.

upon its present host's death, to be transferred to the body of the first being to touch your corpse. Also, during the game, Kay'l will gain the ability to exchange physical bodies whenever he possesses the strength to do so. It is through considered use of the latter that much of the strategic element of the gameplay is revealed.

## Love the facial features

The stunning diversity of scenery depicted in the locations we've seen remains firm testament to the developer's own claim of having created the largest real-time 3D game world yet seen. Truly breathtaking is perhaps the only adequate way to describe the visual design in this game; only



Behind you!

the adoption of an expression of sheer speechless awe would be more appropriate, of course. Like Kay'l himself, The Nomad Soul is a game that inhabits many forms. It is an action game, an adventure game, a fighting game, and a role-playing game simultaneously. Let's hope that Quantic Dream's ability can match their ambition.

David Wildgoose



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						F1 Racing Sim	79	#22
						F16: Aggressor	69	#32
						F22 ADF	87	#21
						F22 ADF: Rea Sea	85	#27
						F22 Lightning 3	85	#40
						FA/18 E Carrier Strike Fighter	68	#30
						Fable	46	#10
						Falcon 4.0	98	#33
						Fallen Haven	71	#13
						Fallout	89	#18
						Fallout 2	88	#32
						Fantasy General	82	#2
						Fatal Abyss	54	#33
						Fields of Fire	53	#29



QUIZ: Published by Microsoft, Motorcross Madness was developed by whom?

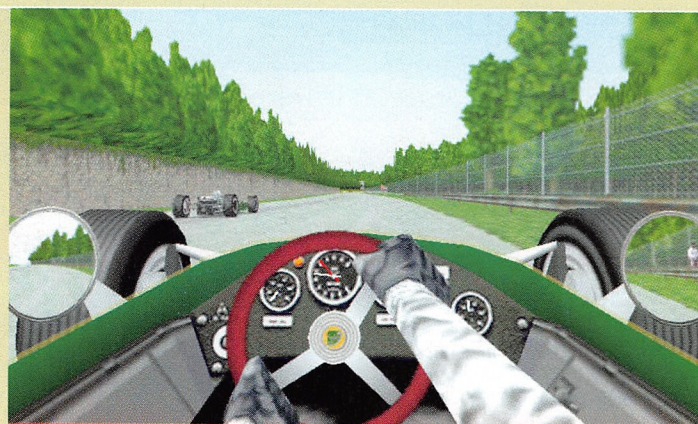


# GOLD: Games scoring 90-94%

# PLATINUM: Games scoring 95-100%

GAME SCOREISSUE

FIFA 97	69	#10	I Have No Mouth and...	79	#3
FIFA 98	95	#20	I-War	89	#21
FIFA 99	92	#32	IF-22	65	#17
FIFA Soccer Manager	71	#16	Ignition	81	#18
Fighter Pilot	71	#32	Imperialism	81	#21
Fighter Squadron	85	#37	Imperialism 2	72	#37
Fighting Force	70	#23	Imperium Galactica	80	#14
Fighting Steel	80	#41	In Pursuit of Greed	70	#5
Final Conflict	20	#24	Incoming	67	#24
Final Doom	82	#6	Incubation	84	#19
Final Fantasy VII	90	#27	Independence Day	85	#13
Firefight	82	#5	Indy Racing	64	#28
Fleet Command	89	#39	Int. Rally Championship	79	#21
Flight Unlimited 2	89	#22	International Cricket Captain	91	#28
Flipout	73	#14	Interstate '76	93	#12
Flying Corps	76	#11	Interstate '76 Arsenal	78	#25
Flying Corps Gold	74	#20	Into the Void	86	#14
Forbidden City	74	#32	Isis	32	#3
Fork in the Tale	58	#13	Israeli Air Force	90	#34
Formula 1 3Dfx	77	#12	Jack Nicklaus 5	89	#21
Formula Karts	84	#19	Jack the Ripper	46	#6
Forsaken	93	#25	Jagged Alliance 2	83	#7
FPS: Skiing	63	#24	Jane's A.T.F	72	#2
Fragile Allegiance	85	#10	Jane's F-15	85	#25
Front Page Sports Golf	77	#18	Jazz Jackrabbit 2	65	#27
Full Court Press	82	#7	Jedi Knight	95	#18
G-Name	80	#15	JK: Mysteries of the Sith	93	#23
G-Police	92	#18	Jet Fighter 3	85	#10
Galapagos	77	#19	Jet Fighter 3: Mission Disk	85	#15
Gangsters	85	#34	Jet Moto	72	#22
Gender Wars	72	#4	Jetfighter: Full Burn	67	#32
Gene Wars	86	#8	Jimmy White's Cueball 2	67	#38
Get Medieval	61	#30	Johnny Herbert's Grand Prix	91	#30
Gettysburg	80	#1	Joint Strike Fighter	85	#20
Gex	80	#7	Jonah Lomu Rugby	45	#20
Gex 2: Enter the Gecko	87	#28	Journeyman Project 3	69	#22
Global Domination	63	#32	Judge Dredd Pinball	82	#30
Golf Pro 2000	65	#12	Karma	20	#2
Goosebumps	79	#10	King's Quest 8	85	#34
Grand Prix 2	90	#1	Kingdom of Magic	69	#4
Grand Prix Legends	95	#30	Kingpin	86	#41
Grand Theft Auto	65	#18	KKnD	90	#7
GTA London	75	#38	KKnD 2: Krossfire	65	#28
Grand Touring	60	#35	KKnD Extreme	70	#19
Great Battles of Alexander	80	#17	Klingon Honour Guard	84	#31
Great Battles of Hannibal	62	#23	Knight and Merchants	81	#32
Grim Fandango	91	#31	Krazy Ivan	57	#9
Gruntz	45	#37	Lander	95	#37
Guardians of Darkness	30	#41	Lands Of Lore 2	92	#17
Half Life	98	#31	Lands of Lore 3	60	#38
Hang Time	79	#11	Last Bronx	70	#24
Hard War	59	#29	Legacy of Kain	65	#18
Harpoon 97	90	#10	Legal Crime	77	#23
Heart of Darkness	89	#27	Lighthouse	88	#8
Heaven's Dawn	25	#6	Links 99	86	#32
Heavy Gear	91	#20	Links LS	90	#6
Heavy Gear II	93	#40	Links LS98	91	#17
Hedz	69	#32	Longbow 2	88	#21
Helicops	79	#15	Lords of Magic	74	#23
Hell Bender	54	#7	Lords of the Realms 2	84	#10
Heretic	50	#3	Lords of the Realms 2:Siege	79	#16
Heretic 2	91	#34	Luftwaffe Command	68	#35
Heroes of Might and Magic II	88	#10	Lunatics	61	#14
Heroes of Might and Magic III	94	#35	M.A.X. 2	81	#30
Hexen	90	#3	M1 Tank Platoon	91	#25
Hexen 2	91	#18	M1A2 Abrams	80	#13
Hexen 2: Portal of Praevus	78	#27	Madden 98	81	#20
Hexplode	75	#28	Madden NFL 97	84	#8
Hidden and Dangerous	88	#41	Madden NFL 99	88	#32
Hind	84	#9	Machines	90	#38
Holy Casino	71	#10	Mage Slayer	64	#20
Homeworld	95	#41	Magic the Gathering: Spec. Ed	69	#25
House of the Dead	59	#28	Magic: The Gather-MicroProse	91	#12
Howzat	2	#22	MTG: Spells of Ancients	70	#21
Hoyle Casino '98	73	#22	Magic: The Gathering-Acclaim	71	#12
Hunter Hunted	70	#10	Man of War	71	#18
Hyperblade	89	#8	Man of War II	15	#40



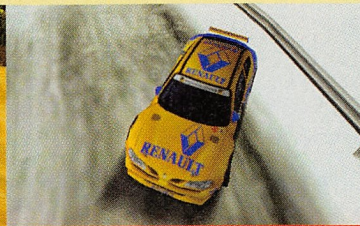
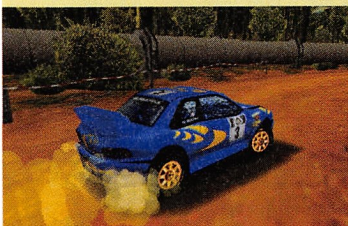
QUIZ: GPL is set in 1967. Who won that year's F1 World Driver's Championship?

Manx TT	44	#23	Netmech	60	#6
Mass Destruction	78	#17	Netstorm	85	#20
Master of Dimension	71	#9	Newman Haas Racing	70	#33
Master Levels for Doom 2	30	#1	NHL 98	90	#19
Master of Orion 2	92	#10	NHL 99	73	#31
Mastermind	71	#26	NHRA Drag Racing	68	#32
Maximum Roadrage	32	#6	Nightlong	79	#31
MDK	83	#12	Nightmare Creatures	79	#27
Meat Puppets	71	#16	Nine	84	#9
Mech Commander	86	#27	Noir	61	#12
Mechwarrior 2: Mercenaries	85	#7	Normality	78	#4
Mechwarrior 2: Titanium	86	#26	Norse by Norsewest	72	#12
Mechwarrior 3	91	#39	North vs. South	67	#37
Mega Race 2	69	#7	Novalogic F16 + MiG 29	90	#32
Metal Storm	25	#10	Nuclear Strike	85	#20
MIA	65	#34	Obsidian	81	#15
MIB	78	#20	Of Light and Darkness	60	#26
Micro Machines v3	80	#29	Offensive	35	#4
Microsoft Combat Flight Sim	89	#33	Olympic Games 1996	44	#6
Microsoft Golf 99	80	#36	Onside	35	#4
Midtown Madness	89	#40	Orion Burger	76	#11
Might & Magic VI	91	#26	Outcast	59	#40
Might & Magic VII	70	#40	Outlaws	78	#13
Mike Stewart's Bodyboarding	34	#40	Outpost 2	68	#18
Mimi and the Mites	78	#6	Outwars	85	#26
Monaco Grand Prix	74	#32	Over The Reich	70	#12
Monopoly: World Cup 98	45	#26	Overboard	79	#19
Monster Truck Madness	77	#7	Pacific General	82	#17
Monster Truck Madness 2	82	#26	Pandemonium 2	20	#30
Monster Trucks	59	#19	Panzer Commander	58	#27
Montezuma's Return	42	#32	Panzer General 2	82	#21
Monty Python's Meaning of Life	57	#25	Paris French Open	72	#18
Moon Buggy 98	81	#18	Pax Imperia	65	#21
Mortal Kombat 4	80	#30	Perfect Assassin	80	#19
Moto Racer	94	#16	PGA Tour Pro	86	#17
Moto Racer 2	86	#30	Phantasmagoria 2	81	#11
Motocross Madness	94	#30	Pilgrim	46	#26
Motorhead	83	#26	Pinball Soccer	72	#33
MS Flight Sim v6	83	#10	Plane Crazy	70	#26
MS Football	36	#10	POD	74	#11
MS Pinball Arcade	86	#34	Populous: The Beginning	86	#32
Mummy	65	#10	Postal	38	#18
Muppet Treasure Island	62	#5	Power Chess	83	#10
Myth 2	91	#35	Power F1	69	#11
Myth: The Fallen Lords	93	#20	Powerboat Racing	70	#25
Nascar 2	76	#11	Powerslide	93	#32
Nascar Road Racing	28	#41	Premier Manager 97	88	#16
Nascar Truck	80	#38	Privateer 2: The Darkening	89	#8
NBA Action 98	85	#23	Pro18 World Tour Golf	69	#38
NBA JAM	39	#14	Pro Pilot	62	#23
NBA Live 98	88	#20	Puma World Football 98	33	#20
NBA Live 99	86	#31	Quake	92	#6
NCAA Final Four '97	74	#12	Quake: Armagon	85	#12
Necrodome	70	#10	Quake: Eternity	72	#12
Need For Speed 2	90	#13	Quake 2	94	#21
Need for Speed 2 SE	80	#21	Q2: The Reckoning	82	#27
Need for Speed 3	79	#28	Q2 Mission Pack: Ground Zero	87	#30
Need for Speed: High Stakes	89	#41	Queen: The Eye	60	#25
Need for Speed SE	56	#5	Quest for Glory V	90	#34



# SCORE LIST

GAME SCOREISSUE



**QUIZ: Which team does Colin McRae drive for?**

Radix	68	#7	Shogo: MAD	84	#32	Terminator: Skynet	94	#12	Vangers	53	#29
Railroad Tycoon 2	91	#33	Shrak Quake	40	#16	Terracide	65	#17	Vegas Games	60	#14
Rainbow 6	91	#30	Sid Meier's Gettysburg	92	#20	Terranova	91	#2	Versailles	81	#11
Rainbow Six: Eagle Watch	86	#36	Silent Hunter	74	#2	Test Drive Off Road	70	#13	Viper Racing	80	#34
Rally Challenge	84	#9	Silent Thunder	72	#2	Tex Murphy: Overseer	89	#24	Virtua Cop	82	#10
Rally Championship	81	#7	Silver	84	#36	TM: The Pandora Directive	93	#6	Virtua Cop 2	78	#21
Rama	86	#10	Sim City 3000	90	#35	The Creed	86	#29	Virtual Deep Sea Fishing	63	#38
Rayman	92	#3	Sim Copter	71	#10	The Feeble Files	73	#19	Virtual Pool 2	93	#19
Re-Volt	82	#41	Sim Safari	60	#25	The Fifth Element	80	#31	Virtual Snooker	80	#2
Reah	78	#32	Sin	84	#32	The Golf Pro	87	#24	Voodoo Kid	79	#18
Realms of the Haunting	91	#11	Sin - Wages of Sin	73	#38	The Last Express	88	#13	Voyeur 2	20	#5
Red Baron 2	92	#23	SlamTilt	68	#12	The Martian Chronicles	48	#9	VR Sports Baseball 97	91	#21
Red Baron 3D	87	#34	Snow Wave Avalanche	60	#33	The Neverhood	93	#9	W. Gretzky & NHLPA Allstars	20	#1
Redguard	78	#35	SODA Offroad Racing	75	#22	The Phantom Menace	76	#39	Wages of War	65	#11
Redjack	70	#31	Solar Crusade	26	#18	The Reap	76	#23	War College Simulator 3	57	#6
Redline	83	#37	Soldier Boyz	12	#29	The Ring	54	#33	War Games	68	#29
Redline Racer	78	#24	Soldiers at War	80	#27	The Tone Rebellion	80	#19	War Games	70	#18
Redneck Deer Hunting	16	#30	Sonic and Knuckles	76	#13	The X-Files	76	#27	War of the Worlds	70	#34
Redneck Rampage	77	#14	Space Bunnies Must Die	74	#31	Theme Hospital	90	#12	Warbirds 2	81	#37
Redneck Rampage Rides Again	48	#26	Space Hulk	74	#5	Thief: Dark Project	95	#33	Warbreeds	54	#26
Redneck Rampage: Route '66	64	#22	Spearhead	89	#30	Thrust, Twist & Turn	30	#39	Warcraft 2: 70 Levels	63	#12
Requiem - Avenging Angel	90	#38	Spec Ops: Ranger Assault	84	#28	Thunder Brigade	79	#35	Warcraft 2: Dark Portal	60	#3
Resident Evil	74	#19	Speed Rally	89	#21	Tiger Woods 99	79	#31	Wargasm	80	#32
Resident Evil 2	88	#37	Speedboat Attack	30	#19	Tigershark	74	#15	Warhammer 40K	88	#22
Return Fire	69	#4	Speedbusters	91	#36	Time Commando	93	#5	Warhammer: Dark Omen	88	#25
Return Fire 2	72	#32	Spiderman: The Sinister Six	49	#11	Time Lapse	80	#9	Warlords 3	89	#16
Return of Arcade	70	#5	Sports Car GT	90	#40	Titanic	74	#10	Warlords 3: Darklords	89	#29
Return to Krondor	79	#34	Spycraft: The Great Game	90	#1	TOCA Touring Cars	94	#20	Warwind 2	54	#22
Ripper	70	#1	Star Command	80	#14	TOCA 2	91	#37	Warzone 2100	88	#38
Risk	84	#15	Star Control 3	77	#8	Tom Clancy SSN	75	#15	Water World	56	#19
Riven	90	#19	Star Rangers	57	#2	Tomb Raider	94	#9	WCW Nitro	52	#35
Riverworld	65	#31	Star Trek Academy	92	#17	Tomb Raider 2	86	#19	Wetrix	40	#31
Road Rash	80	#8	Star Trek Borg	71	#13	Tomb Raider 3	88	#33	Wing Commander Kilrathi	82	#9
Rocket Jockey	68	#15	Star Trek: BOTF	90	#39	Tomb Raider: Unfinished Bus.	68	#26	Wing Commander Prophecy	90	#22
Rogue Squadron	82	#33	Star Trek Generations	83	#13	Top Gun: Fire At Will	60	#1	Wipeout 2097	75	#14
Roland Garros	85	#32	Star Trek Pinball	76	#25	Top Gun: Hornet's Nest	65	#34	Witchaven 2	59	#4
Rollcage	90	#38	Star Trek: Deep Space Nine	64	#2	Torin's Passage	50	#1	Wizardry	80	#9
Rollercoaster Tycoon	93	#36	Star Wars: Rebellion	88	#24	Total Air War	92	#31	Wizardry Gold	52	#4
Ruthless.com	82	#35	Starball	45	#2	Total Annihilation	98	#18	Wolfenstein 3D	100	#25
S.C.A.R.S.	64	#31	Starcraft	92	#25	TA: Commander	85	#34	Wooden Ships and Iron Men	71	#13
Sabre Ace	82	#18	Starcraft Insurrection	79	#29	TA: Core Contingency	90	#26	World Cup 98	84	#27
Safe Cracker	49	#24	Starcraft: Brood Wars	87	#35	Total Annihilation: Kingdoms	84	#40	World League Basketball	58	#26
Saga: Rage of the Vikings	42	#40	Starcraft: Retribution	71	#34	Total Mayhem	64	#3	World League Soccer 98	85	#26
Sand Warrior	68	#16	Stars!	89	#11	Trespasser	60	#33	World Rally Fever	68	#4
Scarab	81	#13	Starship Titanic	71	#24	Triple Play 97	63	#5	Worms 2	90	#19
Screamer 2	81	#8	Starsiege	90	#37	Triple Play 98	82	#16	Worms Armageddon	83	#36
Sega Rally	72	#11	Starsiege Tribes	88	#35	Triple Play 99	87	#26	Worms Reinforcements	84	#5
Sega Rally 2	68	#41	Steel Panthers	84	#21	Trophy Bass	72	#28	Wreckin' Crew	27	#29
Sega Touring Car Champ.	29	#23	Steel Panthers add-on disk	75	#6	Trophy Bass 2	40	#25	Wrestlemania	80	#5
Semper Fi	50	#24	Stratosphere	82	#28	Turok 2	54	#33	WWII Fighters	92	#33
Sentient	68	#14	Street Fighter Alpha 2	69	#27	Turok Dinosaur Hunter	89	#20	X-Wing Alliance	94	#37
Sentinel Returns	84	#27	Streets of Sim City	30	#21	Twinsen's Odyssey	84	#15	X-Wing vs. TIE	93	#13
Settlers 2	87	#3	Strife	86	#6	Tyrian	54	#7	X-Wing vs. TIE: Balance Power	83	#22
Settlers 2 Mission Disk	67	#12	SU-27 Flanker Mission Disk	88	#18	UEFA 98/99	71	#38	X-Car	61	#20
Settlers 3	88	#33	Sub Culture	82	#19	U.F.O.	73	#29	X-COM: Apocalypse	93	#15
Seven Kingdoms	87	#21	Super EF2000 Taccom	92	#11	Ubik	81	#24	X-COM: Interceptor	77	#27
Shadow Man	61	#41	Super Stardust	89	#6	Ultimate Race Pro	68	#23	Xenocracy	68	#28
Shadow Master	70	#24	Superbike World Champ.	91	#34	Ultimate Soccer Manager 2	72	#12	XS	71	#9
Shadow Warrior	80	#18	Surface Tension	15	#9	Ultra Violent Worlds	30	#29	Yoda Stories	74	#12
Shadows of the Empire	80	#18	Swat 2	75	#29	Unreal	98	#26	You Don't Know Jack XL	94	#2
Shadows Over Riva	84	#15	SWIV	82	#9	Unreal: Return to Na Pali	72	#41	You Don't Know Jack: Movies	88	#14
Shane Warne Cricket	86	#37	Syndicate Wars	91	#9	Uprising	89	#22	Z	72	#6
Shanghai Dynasty	93	#22	Take No Prisoners	81	#19	Uprising 2	58	#36	Zombie Wars	69	#13
Shattered Steel	86	#8	Tanarus	85	#22	Urban Assault	81	#29	Zork Grand Inquisitor	96	#20
Shellshock	40	#6	Team Apache	83	#28	USCF Chess	71	#23	Zork Nemesis	86	#2
Sherlock Holmes	90	#9	Tempest 2000	90	#1	V2000	45	#33			
Shivers 2	52	#14	Terminator: Future Shock	90	#1						

**QUIZ ANSWERS on pg. 130**

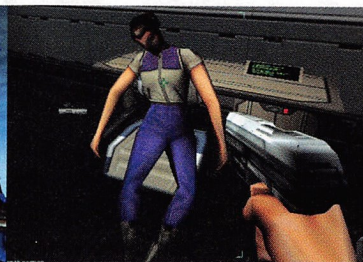




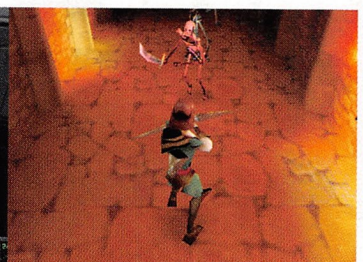
PAGE 56 Age of Empires II



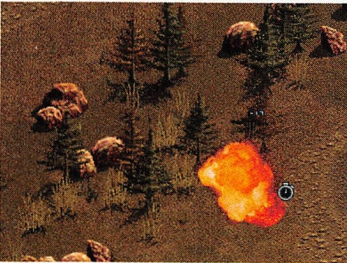
PAGE 60 Braveheart



PAGE 64 System Shock 2



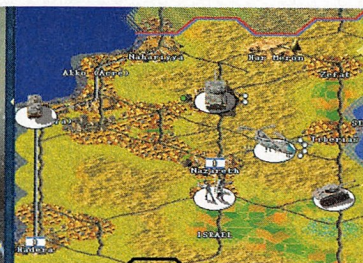
PAGE 68 Darkstone



PAGE 70 Jagged Alliance 2



PAGE 72 Force 21



PAGE 74 Operational Art of War



PAGE 76 Mig Alley

## Review Contents Template

### Issue No. [ 42 ]

It's been another fantastic month in the world of gaming. On the RTS front, we had the pleasure of finally getting our hands on the stupendous AGE of EMPIRES II. As expected, Ensemble have produced another winner. Epic in scale and challenging to boot, AOE II also gets our vote for being one of the most beautiful RTS games ever.

Similarly, Braveheart showed us that there's plenty of room for games steeped in historical detail. If you've got plenty of resolve, then Braveheart is an extremely challenging and rewarding title for your gaming pleasure.

System Shock 2 is another utterly brilliant, captivating & beautifully designed game for this month's shopping list. However, it's pure genius doesn't come as much of a surprise. After all, it's from the same incredibly talented team behind Thief.

It seems that Looking Glass can do no wrong.

Darkstone and Clans, both basic Diablo clones, reminded us that it takes something special to make a simple idea work (Ha, Blizzard).

Other games we particularly enjoyed this month were Jagged Alliance 2 and Force 21.

Anyway, too many games and not enough time.

Till next month,

*March*

March Stepnik

p.s. there you go guys, I've filled out the form. Can I play System Shock 2 now?

## ISSUE 42 REVIEWS

Age of Empires 2: Age of Kings .....	56
Braveheart .....	60
System Shock 2 .....	64
Darkstone .....	68
Jagged Alliance 2 .....	70
Force 21 .....	72
Operational Art of War 2 .....	74
Mig Alley .....	76
Castrol Honda Superbikes 2000 .....	77
Clans .....	78
FA Premier League Stars .....	80
Sky Dive! .....	81
Amerzone .....	82
Fly! .....	83

### THE PC POWERPLAY SCORING SYSTEM

95%+	PLATINUM The Best. Virtually faultless, reserved for games which cause loss of sleep from thinking of nothing else.
90-94%	GOLD A classic. Either an unquestionable example of superiority within its genre, or a ground breaking game that'll be setting trends.
80-90%	A strong, eminently playable game. Hard to fault and likely to still be on the hard drive in 6 month's time.
60-80%	Competent and generally enjoyable. Flaws or mediocrity hold these games back from higher ratings.
40-60%	Average and ordinary. Not bad, not good. Ideal gift.
0-40%	Bad, really bad. Boring, shamelessly unoriginal, cheap and horrible.



# AGE OF EMPIRES II

## AGE OF KINGS

PCPP  
GOLD

●Genre: RTS ●Players: 1-4 ●Developer: Ensemble Studios ●Publisher: Microsoft ●Distributor: Microsoft ●Price: \$TBA ●Rating: G  
●Available: Now ●Need: P133, 32 MB RAM, 100 MB hard disk space ●Want: P2, 64MB RAM ●URL: [www.ageofkings.org/](http://www.ageofkings.org/)

Just like fine wine, this RTS gets better with Age.

When Age of Empires was released it was to not inconsiderable fanfare. I recall one enthusiastic reviewer at this very magazine declaring that even the mighty Sid Meier of Civilisation fame had best be on his toes. Whether or not you believe that AoE was that good, you'd do well to approach the sequel without astronomical expectations. Now, don't get me wrong. AoK is a great real-time strategy game. It's absorbing, entreaty and addictive. It is, however, primarily a further refinement of the original formula and not a completely new and revolutionary gaming experience. But then again, it never claimed to be.

### It's been tweaked!

Ensemble Studios have been hard at work perfecting the AoE charm. There are 13 new civilisations, more military units - including cannons, female villagers, and armoured knights. More advanced building structures like castles and operating gates also make an entrance. There's also a slew of new gorgeously detailed maps, a more advanced trading system and a selection of new, precision combat formations. The interface has also undergone some basic tweaking and is

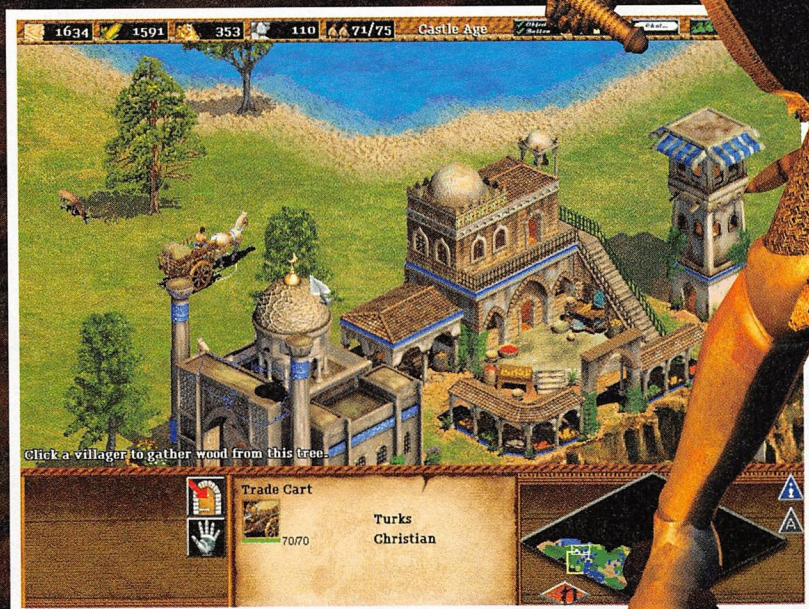
more user-friendly than ever.

Of all the new additions, the town bell is perhaps the most useful. Is a surprise attack proving too much to handle? Ring the bell and your good little villagers will run into any nearby buildings, avoiding slaughter if quick enough. There are of course more little changes here and there, but these are mostly of the incidental variety.

### First Impressions

When I first opened the instruction manual, my little heart went pitter pat. Being a bit of a fan of Ancient and Medieval history, my eyes lit up with pictures of Cataphracts and Jannisaries and Huskarls and all the other little bits of historical flourish that's featured in AoK. With an attention to fine detail and authenticity, Ensemble have really made the AoK come to life. And that's just the manual!

After a quick flip through the instructions I jumped straight into the in-game tutorial. Simple and elegant, the interface was a breeze to use. The first thing that ▶







The Byzantine empire didn't go for much in the way of greenery.

## "...all units give their order confirmation in their native tongues."

I noticed regarding gameplay was that the micro-economic management aspect of AoK was a piece of cake. This is one game where you won't be battling the interface and complex game

I then had a look through the campaigns. Wow! Major and not so major contemporaneous figures like Genghis Khan, Barbarossa and Joan of Arc feature predominantly. What's more, these campaigns are based firmly in fact and not in pure fiction. For example, Joan of Arc does have to liberate France, and Genghis does drive savagely east. It's the nice touches like these that enhance and bring the game alive. A flourish I absolutely loved was that all units give their order confirmation in their native tongues. Nothing better than hearing your savage Knights scream attack in High German or Turkish.

### Familiar territory

Basic gameplay unfortunately is not particularly new and outstanding in nature. It's the same old get lumber, get gold, get stone and other sundry material and then build houses for people, build barracks and of course build markets and whatever else that

you may want or need. From there, you simply upgrade. Similar to AoE, you upgrade your overall technological levels through research, advancing through historical ages. From Dark, to Feudal through to the Age of the Castle and so on you move along once resource target numbers are met. This adds a dimension of arms race with your neighbours and balances unchecked expansion and aggression. Rather than spending all your resources on amassing huge armies, this forces you to consider diverting resources to advancing an age. It's the old argument of quality versus quantity, and which serves your purposes better.

Also, the growth of your nations can actually be quite exciting as you see culture and education enter your general populace.

### Let Slip the Dogs of War

Somewhat more altered from the first game, the combat features are complex. I assumed combat was simply a case of drag a window over a lot of troops and hope for the best when a million crazed visigoths came running over a hill at me. Then I realised I kept losing because I was not using the more advanced features of the sequel. ▶



## TIPS

- One of the best tactical approaches is to have units with a variety of troops. Put your missile fire behind your melee troops so they can fire over their heads. Later on, use heavy cavalry to perform sweeping and flank attacks.
- If your civilisation is on an island or geographically located in a strongly defensible position, think about just putting a lot of walls up and building a wonder. Last 3000 years with your wonder intact and you win the game.



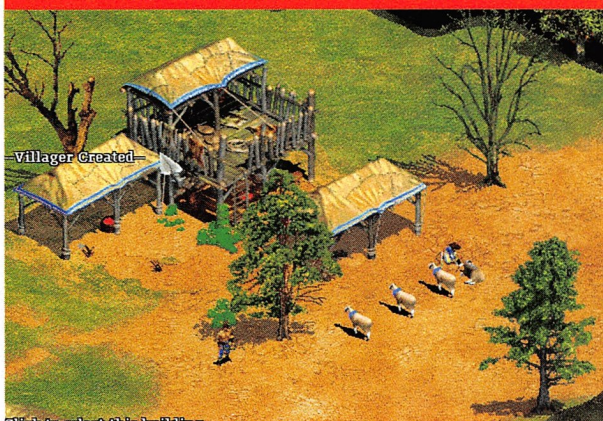
"And this one's for the rancid seafood you served last night!"



Once the cavalry had breached the grain farms, the village was history.



## MARATHON GAMING



From humble beginnings...

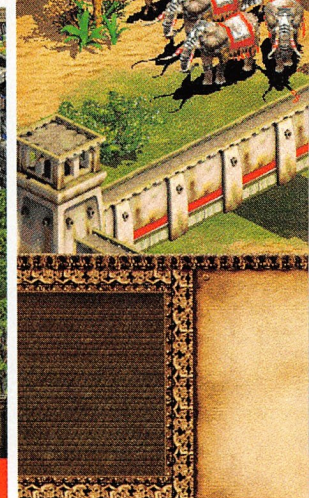
It's recommended that you find yourself an extremely comfortable chair to sit in and a relaxing position to play from when embracing the Age of Kings. See, most missions will take, on average, 2-3 hours to successfully complete - and this doesn't include re-loads and exploration time. While not up there with turn-based strategy game (for obvious reasons), this is perhaps the most demanding RTS game out there, at least in terms of time investment per mission.



Confuse the enemy with oddly-angled walls.



A bustling city is truly a sight to behold.



What's holding that axe then?

► The simple formations add a new depth to planning defence, offence and raiding. The use of a large variety of units means that you can be flexible in the tactics and strategies you employ. The AI is very sophisticated; intelligence routines for individual unit actions, pathing of units, and

strategic play have all been redone for the sequel, so pay very, very close attention to the stats of your troops. Sending large numbers of poor and outdated troops to attack castles will just see them picked off and you will have wasted time and money - they may have been better used elsewhere.

The key to the success in the game would have to be balancing of the various units. A good heavy cavalry charge will undo virtually any infantry, except for pikemen. Crossbow units are great first line defence, but when the champion units or the German berserks enter melee range, they fold like paper. You'd also do well to ensure that your attacking party has a good balance of differing types of units. This

paper/scissors/stone style of combat is intriguing. It also ensures that you will want to get a grip of various different civilisations before you decide on one above any others.

### Expansionist policies

One of the more notable changes in the Age of Kings is the scale of the structures that you create. They are noticeably larger, taking up more space on the monitor than the first. Now, this looks very impressive (Byzantine castles and Mosques are especially beautiful) and is certainly one of the stand out features of the game, but it creates certain problems in gameplay. The civilisations are spread out over wide areas and natural resources and



The livestock line-dancing troupe.



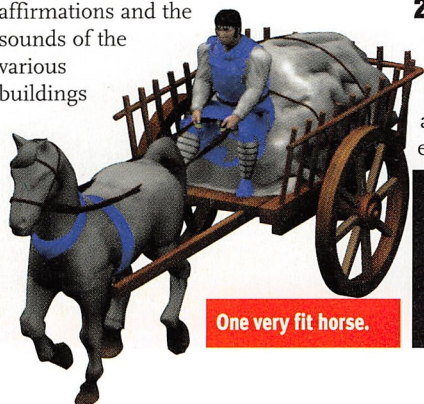




features are harder to utilise within a game context. Of course, this is simply another challenge to be overcome. Markets are expanded upon and you can now buy and sell the various resources that you need. For example, just need another 200 stone for a castle but can't divert the workers? Just buy them from your market.

### A aural and visual feast.

The nuts and bolts of AoK are very good. Sound and music are subtle and used to good effect. Eastern cultures have eastern music and western cultures the same. Battle sounds are effective and more than simply a tiny clash of metal, bows twang and arbalests crack. Units make different command affirmations and the sounds of the various buildings



One very fit horse.

at work are very realistic and well done.

Graphically, Age of Empires 2 is absolutely beautiful. The fifteen types of maps are all well done, each having a distinct landscape and the campaign maps all stick thematically to the history and events involved. France looks like France, Mongolia looks Mongolian.

The villagers and combat units are also rather neatly animated. And detailed! Animals are butchered, sails flutter in the wind, farmers work the rows and great knights sit atop prancing horses. The buildings are well designed and easily identifiable, something that can be quite important if you're a history buff, and for when your cities expand and grow.

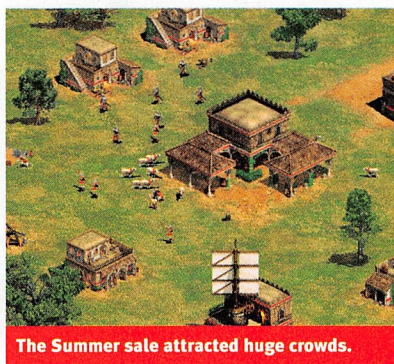
### 2-3 hour sessions

AoK isn't exactly perfect though. Firstly, single missions can take an extremely long time to play through and when you consider that you spend extended periods of time exclusively

## FOLLOW THE LEADER

"Sire, are we there yet?" "No." "Are we there yet?" "No." "Are we..."

AoK isn't all about long protracted battles - there's a fair share of well-scripted missions too. A la StarCraft and C&C, these missions require you to direct a smaller bunch of units throughout various hotspots with only just enough resources to successfully finish. For example, the first mission requires you to guard an precious envoy through enemy territory to a friendly reception. Designed specifically to counter resource and empire management tedium, these missions are a welcome addition to Age of Kings.



The Summer sale attracted huge crowds.



Nice hat.

empire building, tedium may occasionally set in. This goes doubly so if the empire building element bores you. And then there's the certain sense of predetermination with the location of your town centre. I would've preferred if I could have chosen where to lay the foundations of my new empire.

Finally, I found it extremely difficult to form alliances with others, no matter how much cash I pumped into tributes. Admittedly, all these are pretty minor quibbles.

Age of Kings is tremendous and I was left with the overall impression that the team at Ensemble Studios poured long and hard over feedback about AoE and really thought to add as many handy features and functions that enhance the original experience. It's engrossing, it's enticing and above all, Age of Kings is a lot of fun. A natural - if conservative - progression from the original Age of Empires. ■

Christian Read

PLUS

[www1.enloe.wake.k12.nc.us/enloe/CandC/death/warfare.html](http://www1.enloe.wake.k12.nc.us/enloe/CandC/death/warfare.html)

Curious about how it happened in the real world? This site is all about the tactics, campaigns and weapons that were actually used during this period. Check it out!

PCPP

**FOR:** Compelling gameplay, great detail, involving plots and a fantastic interface.

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**AGAINST:** Complex, perhaps overly so.

94

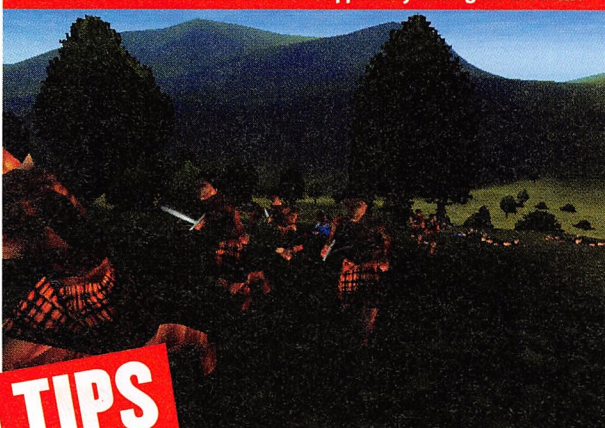


# BRAVEHEART

●Genre: Real-time strategy/turn-based hybrid ●Players: 1-4 ●Developer: Red Lemon ●Publisher: Eidos ●Distributor: Ozisoft ●Price: \$89.95 ●Rating: M ●Available: Now  
 ●Need: Pentium II 233, 32MB RAM, 300MB HD space ●Want: PIII, 128MB RAM ●URL: <http://www.brave-heart.net/>

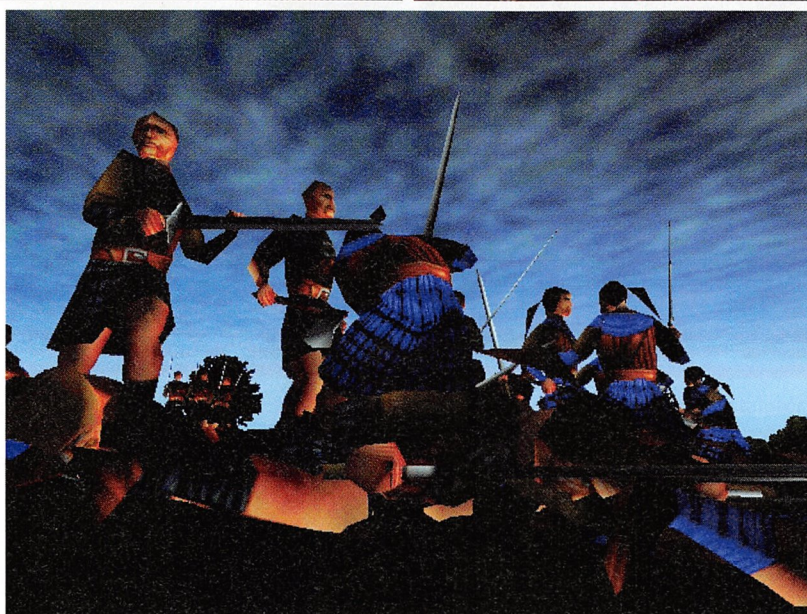
Och me laddies - tis a damn gued strategy ghame if yeh cun get yur hed roond et!

A dramatic re-enactment of the Von Trapp family fleeing for the hills.



## TIPS

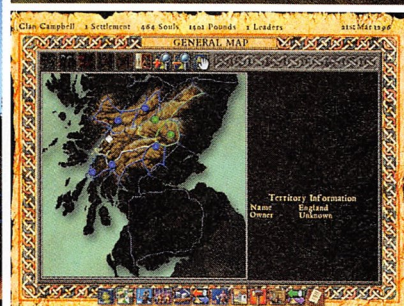
- Firstly, make sure that you have a strong economy before marching out to conquer the other clan lands, which is doubly important if you have taken a more political clan. This means you should be ensuring that there is an even distribution between warriors and workers and that you have a goodly amount of trade coming in. There are much bigger and nastier out there than you.
- It is also very important to get spies and scouts out and working for you. The last thing you want is to invade a town with 10 troops to discover they have some 30 or more heavily armed elite clansmen.
- Be wary of nearby clans who are invading other clans because even if you have an alliance they will turn on you. When in combat try and kill or capture the general. It will pretty much defeat the enemy instantly. Conversely, protect your own leader or if you think it's an easy fight, don't use him because you too can collapse.



William Wallace, unfortunately, was not quite the libertarian and heroic soul that we met in the Braveheart movie, but then again, I doubt that Dark Ages Scottish Clan war was not nearly as fun, engrossing and complicated as this game. Originally released as Tartan Army, small

genuinely Scottish studio, Red Lemon had a stroke of luck when the Academy Award winning film of 1995 was released during development. Teaming up with the mega-publisher Eidos, it seems that they have hit upon a winning combination.

It's not easily describable, this

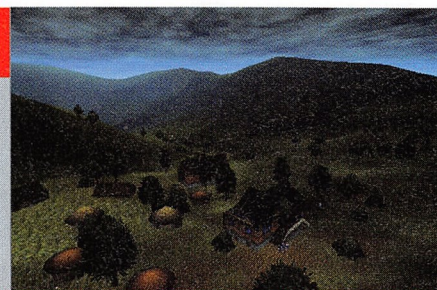


strange new beast. The closest thing to it is the well-known RTS, but then again, it does not have the break neck phrenetics of such games. Also, it hardly features the formal and often dull progression of turn-based combat. There's a happy medium instead. It might sound like the bastard child of

## PRRRRETTY, ISN'T SHE?

One of the truly exceptional successes of Braveheart is the majestic, often beautiful, landscapes used. The landscape was mapped and scanned from satellite data of the entire of the UK on a 500-metre grid to 50-metre accuracy. Then fractally refined to 50 X 50cm polygons. If that does not impress you, the 650,000,000,000 polygons in the landscape just might. Then there

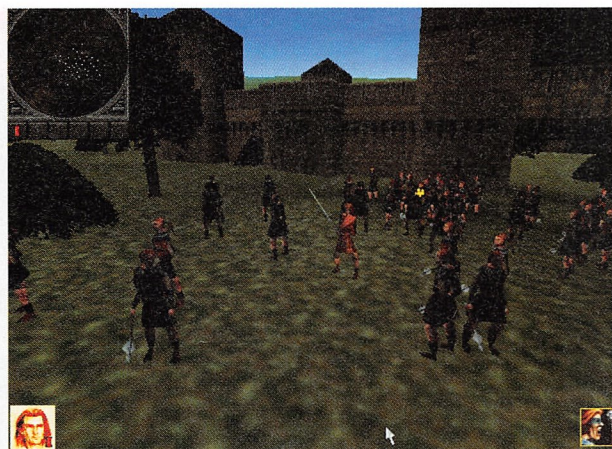
is progressive mesh refinement on the countryside, which allows visibility to be simulated to a virtual 16Km. Environmental audio positions people in loving 3D and seasonal changes affect sunrise/sunset, trees, snowline and weather. And finally, ambient and diffuse light tone adjusts according to time of day. Braveheart is a stunner.



Pretty - all 650 million polygons of it.



The McCall clan - famous for their hinge-less knees.



“...it has earned the endorsement of the Clan Association of Scotland.”



three game genres, but it is not. Rather it uses some of the best qualities of each of these game styles, and combines them into one glorious whole.

### Politically tempestuous

It's pretty simple stuff to start out with. Immersed in the violent and politically tempestuous 13th C Scotland you must fight against not only the English but also against the some 200 player and non-player Scottish Clans included in the game. They all attack, defend and have an impact on the overall gameplay and story. Picking one of 16 clans is not as easy as you'd think either - each have their own leaders,

strengths, and weaknesses.

The game itself features single scenarios for those who want specific battles, as well as two full campaigns. One campaign begins in the year 1280 and challenges you to defeat all enemies and unite Scotland. The second starts after 1280 and requires you to unite Scotland, crown yourself king, and then move on to England. And it's not at all easy...

### Robert the Bruce?

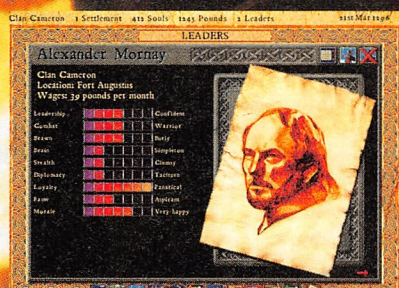
Having the license from the movie certainly does wonders for the game. Angus McFayden, who you may recall played the rather magnificent Robert



**PLUS**

<http://ctc.simplenet.com/braveheart/index2.shtml>

The real William Wallace may not have been anywhere near as attractive, but that hasn't stopped Mel Gibson championing the cause with Braveheart, the movie. An immense hit, Braveheart has received an absolutely huge following. Go here for some movie bytes and stills, a good collection of links and of course, The True Story Of William Wallace.

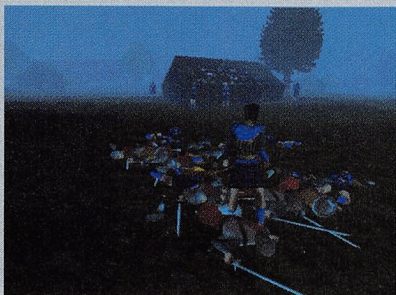


As gorgeous as the battle screens are, a lot of time is spent looking at these stats and icons.

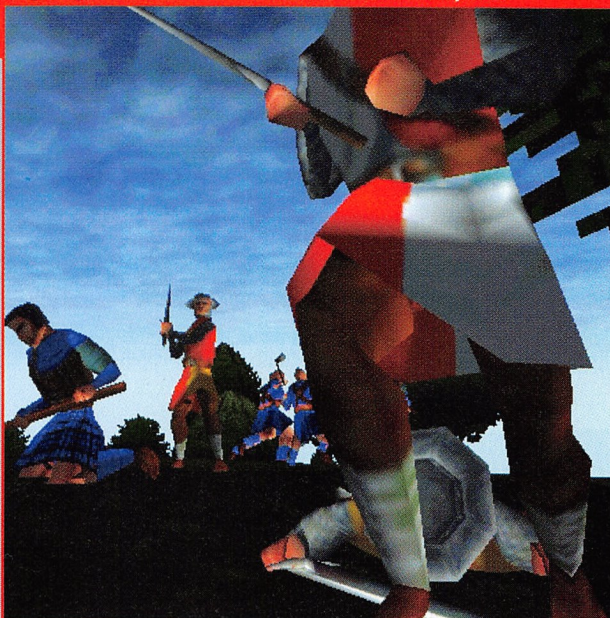


## A GAME WITH A VIEW

The battlefield is viewed with a true 3D-terrain engine and the units are fully articulate polygonal figures, extremely well rendered. The armies charging and fighting are quite bloodthirsty and realistic. The savage clansmen use the claidhmores, war hammers and axes with brutal purpose and arrows rain down thudding into bodies that fall dead onto the green grass. Thankfully, this violent action can be viewed from several camera angles. Third-person view is the most easy to utilise. The top-down view, which is the most effective when planning your attacks and the incredibly cool first-person perspective that casts you as one of the warriors.



Fighting for their freedom - to not have to wear underpants.



► the Bruce in the movie, narrates the game and plays your adviser. His contribution to the atmosphere of the game is great. They also use something of an authority that you can't really argue with: Seoras Wallace, chief of the present day Clan Wallace, has lent his talent and expertise to enhance the game's sense of realism. He also worked closely with Gibson on the film, as an actor and fight choreographer. In fact, so much detail has gone into the accuracy of the game, that it has earned the endorsement of the Clan Association of Scotland. The accuracy and realism is that good.

### War footing

Braveheart's campaigns are based on situations and historical battles that Scottish clans might have encountered. After you choose your clan, you must decide how to allocate your peasants to various endeavours: amassing trade goods, stockpiling weaponry, or making siege equipment. Then you walk the thin line of growing the food and stocks at the expense of the war footing. If you don't you can lose a lot of your clan in one short season. You live or die on what you yourself grow.

### Slippery diplomacy

The military missions of the game are complex and interesting. You assign your leaders, clan chiefs and the like, to armies and outfit your men with weapons, siege equipment and defensive gear. This defines their role within your greater military organisation. If you need to, you can send some of your men to training camps and others on patrols, which means that you are never totally unprepared for raids and other offences. Spies and diplomats add the political dimension sorely lacking in the usual Warcraft style fare. Diplomacy can be quite the slippery

beast, even moreso with the large number of clans you deal with in the game. Each clan is programmed to be very self-interested. Clans will also consider what they have learned about you through their spies. Now, while you think that's hard, clan leaders have wildly different personalities. Some are allies, some are purely self interested and some just hate you.

You also have the choice to undertake either combat, political, or even land/resource management style of play. Each strategy can win a strategy, though proficiency in certain set skills will have a strong effect on your style of warfare.

### Bugger hard

The only real problem with Braveheart is that it is almost too complex. Screens are packed with icons, numbers and symbols and the amount of action that must be monitored in game is sometimes daunting. This is definitely not a beginner's level game.

Personally, I'd say that this is one of the most important releases in strategy gaming for years. It is a natural evolution and communion of two important styles of strategy gaming (both RTS and turn-based) that will redefine and question the current interface of games and prevent the genre from becoming too stale. It's completely engrossing too. ■

Christian Read



The Gibson clan: particularly fashion co-ordinated.



PCPP

**FOR:** Incredible combination of real-time and turn based strategy elements. Fantastic graphics and gameplay viewpoint.

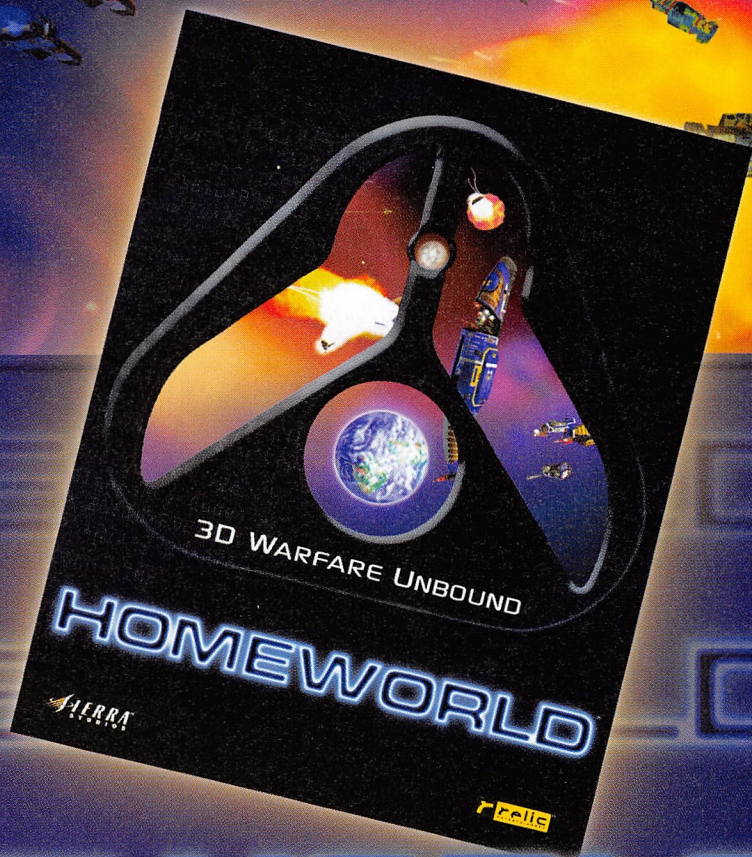
**AGAINST:** Very complex, long and, at times, confusing.

86



Mind blowing, Fully 3D, Strategic Combat in deep space...  
the universe of Strategy Games, as we know it, has just changed forever

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HOME



HOME

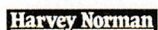


HOMEWORLD

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Available at:



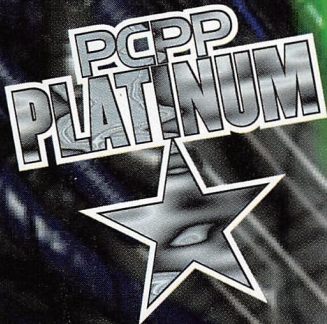
and all good computer stores.



# SYSTEM SHOCK 2

●Genre: First Person Sci-Fi RPG ●Players: 1 ●Developer: Irrational Games/Looking Glass Studios ●Publisher: Electronic Arts ●Distributor: Electronic Arts ●Price: £79.95 ●Rating: MA ●Available: Now  
 ●Need: P200, 32MB RAM, 4x CDROM, 4MB 3D Card, 200MB HDD ●Want: PIII300, 64MB RAM, 8x CDROM, 8MB 3D Card, 3D Sound Card (A3D, EAX), 500MB HDD ●URL: [www.shock2.com](http://www.shock2.com)

"In 2072, a rogue AI called SHODAN lost her mind..."



As you walk down a deserted corridor, only your echoing footsteps and the monotonous hum of electronic equipment break the eerie silence. The sterile environment reminds you of a hospital. You hate hospitals. An otherworldly sound from behind you raises the hairs on the back of your neck. You spin around, tightening your grip on a wrench that seemed a lot bigger a second ago. You breathe a sigh of relief, nothing there. Then the cry comes again, louder this time, and from a seemingly different location. Struggling not to panic, you break out in a cold sweat, your breath coming in ragged gasps. As you inch toward the source of the sound, you question your own psychological stability. After all, this is only supposed to be a game!

## "The Many welcomes you"

Such is the power of System Shock 2, the latest masterpiece from Looking Glass Studios and Irrational Games. System Shock 2's ability to immerse you in its world is simply phenomenal. From the outset, you feel not only as though you're moving through a futuristic environment, but that you're also part of that futuristic society. A major factor contributing to this impression is SS2's character generation system. Most RPG's have you select a character class and some areas of expertise, then click a button to enter the game world.

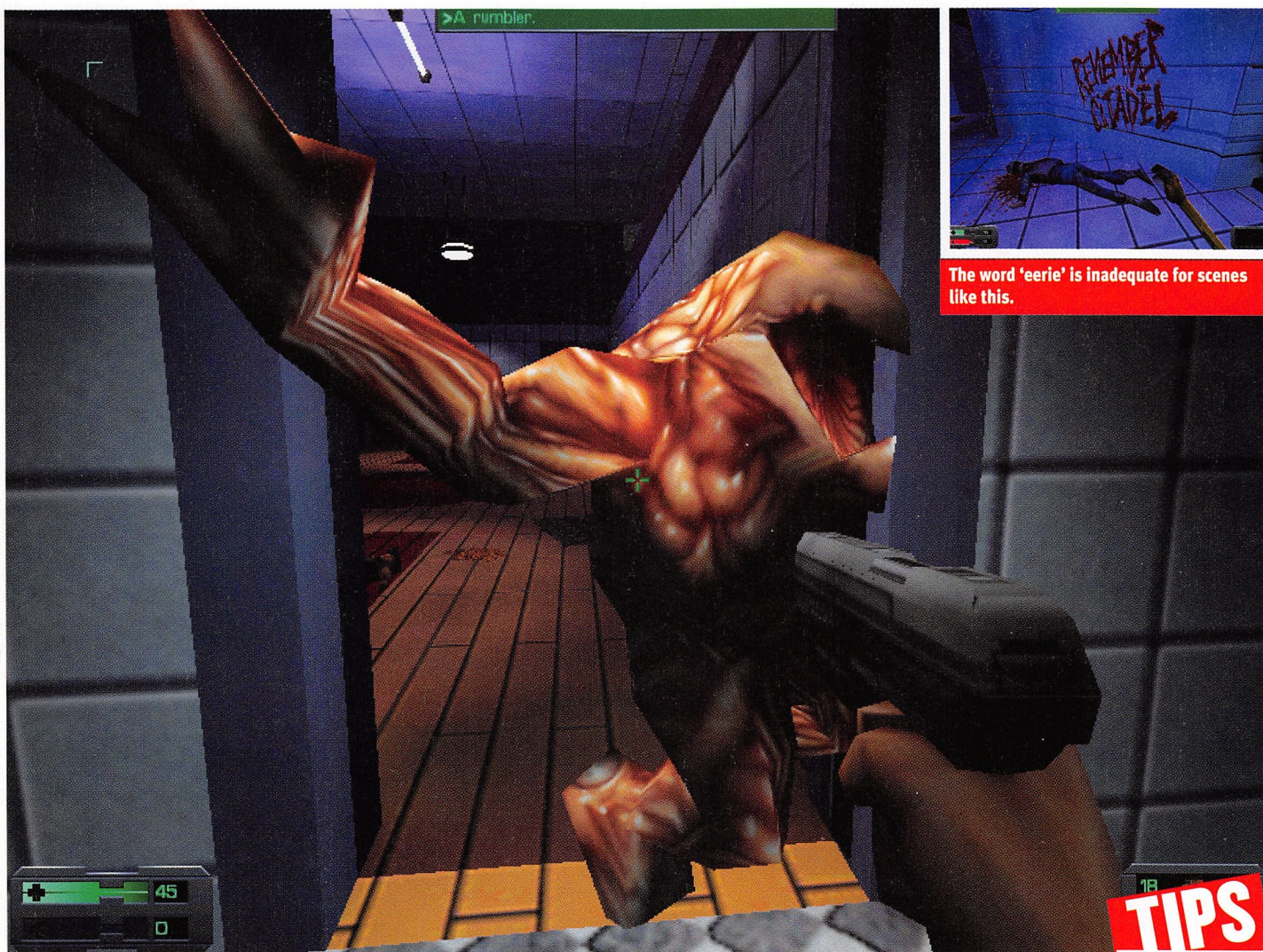
In stark Contrast, SS2 seamlessly integrates the character generation process with the game world itself. You start the game, four years into the past, on a city street outside the UNN recruitment building. Within the building, you receive Basic and Advanced training, a process which serves to familiarise you with the game's mechanics.

You're then given the choice of



The UNN training facility, Earth.





The word 'eerie' is inadequate for scenes like this.

pursuing a career in the Navy, the Marines or the OSA (Black Ops). Marines train extensively in the use of weapons, Naval personnel master technical skills like hacking, and OSA operatives refine and improve their Psionic abilities. Following recruitment, you're transferred to an orbital platform where you undertake three one-year tours of duty. These assignments each increase one of your character's skills. From there, it's on to the TriOptimum starship Von Braun, where you'll serve your fourth (and hopefully not final) year of training.

### "I'm sorry"

You wake from cryosleep on the Von Braun's Med/Sci deck. Still groggy from the effects of various sedatives, you wander around to get your bearings. A lone crewmember contacts you via voicemail, informing you that

## "Clumsily knocking over a jar can have potentially fatal consequences."

forces unknown have hijacked the Von Braun. The ship, once teeming with scientists and administrative staff, now seems devoid of life. This traumatic start to the game is but a minor irritation in comparison to what can only be described as the nightmare journey ahead.

XERXES, the Von Braun's onboard computer, has allied with the unknown boarders and is treating you as hostile. And areas that you thought devoid of life are patrolled by hideous abominations that appear to be alien/human hybrids. Compounding the problem are various automated security systems bent on

## TIPS

THE TOP 10 SIGNS YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING TOO MUCH SYSTEM SHOCK 2:

- 1: You're accosted by bank security after suspiciously jumping out of the line of sight of the surveillance cameras.
- 2: You grumble about junkies leaving their 'Crack Hypos' where people can step on them.
- 3: Tired of soft drinks, you attempt to hack a Coke machine in the hope that it'll start dispensing bourbon.
- 4: You relentlessly taunt armed gangsters, confident in the knowledge that your Quantum Bio-Reconstruction Machine will resurrect you.
- 5: You drastically reduce your alcohol and tobacco intakes, utterly convinced that they'll hinder your Psionic abilities.
- 6: You try to pay for your romantic dinner for two with Nanites.
- 7: You are banned from Taronga Zoo for life after attempting to destroy the Primate enclosure.
- 8: You take comfort in knowing that, if all else fails, you've got your trusty yellow wrench for backup.
- 9: You stock up on chips and vodka when you're feeling low on energy.
- 10: You launch a covert, pre-emptive strike on your neighbour's worm farm.





## MARINE MACHINE



The shotgun is highly effective against predatory sofas.

First Person Shooter (FPS) addicts will be immediately comfortable with the Marines' emphasis on weapon usage. What they may not be so comfortable with is rapid weapon degradation. To combat this problem, I signed up for a tour of duty that would enhance my Maintenance skills. Figuring that dabbling in hacking might also come in handy, I took a tour that gave me elementary Cyber skills. This hunch proved to be correct, as the ability to hack security systems late in the game made the going much easier. Armour is one of your most valuable assets, so I also undertook a tour of duty that upped my Strength rating.

I found that, in the opening stages of the game, there were scant few available (or useable) weapons to be found. Consequently, the Marine became an easier character to use as the game progressed. Ammunition conservation was vitally important, and I found myself taking single shotgun shells from the bodies of vanquished Hybrids. While time consuming, this practice ensured that I almost always had enough ammo for the job. Being able to rapidly switch ammo types, and knowing each enemy species' weakness also aided in minimising my ammunition expenditure.

Without the benefit of extensive hacking skills or psi powers, I found that listening out for the sound made by security cameras, or checking for potential camera positions before entering a room, was the only way to avoid attracting unwanted attention. The leaning keys also became my best friends during my ordeal.

If System Shock 2's impressive array of weapons has you foaming at the mouth, the Marine is your character. But bear in mind that entering any situation in a gung ho fashion is guaranteed to drastically reduce your life expectancy.

**Brett Robinson**

► destroying you the minute you show up on their sensors. In attempting to survive, and discover the fate of the Von Braun and its occupants, your skills and reflexes are tested to the limit.

The creatures you battle are imaginatively designed, and more than a little disturbing. The Hybrids are particularly unnerving, as their human sides struggle to overcome the sinister influences of their parasite puppet masters. The fear they instil is also largely due to the sounds they make. Audio plays an integral role in your survival. Objects within the game world make noise when they're

"May I help you with that?" BOOM!

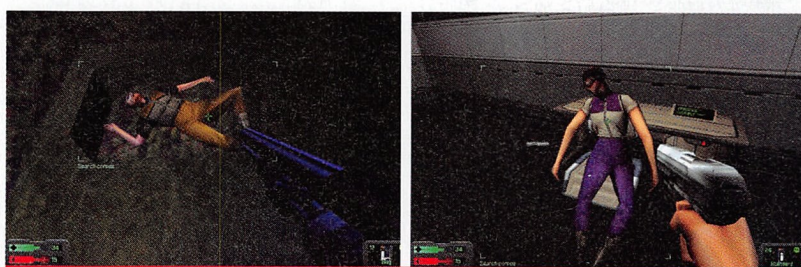


The Recreation Deck: take some time off to shoot pool or tinkle the ivories.

dropped, moved or hit with other objects. Clumsily knocking over a jar can have potentially fatal consequences, as all enemies investigate unusual sounds. Remarkably, all this visual and aural splendour comes courtesy of a heavily modified version of Thief's Dark Engine. It's not Quake 3, but it does the job of immersing the player perfectly.

**"Your song is not ours!"**

The game's crisp 16-bit textures, stunning ambient lighting and incredible 3D audio coalesce into one of the most atmospheric environments ever. Each deck aboard the Von Braun features equipment and facilities that you'd expect to find on a late 21st century starship. The cavernous Engineering deck is crammed with machinery and cargo containers, the



Why is everyone just lying about? It must after deadline. Lazy bastards!



## PSI-KICK



The Psi-guy can 'think' his enemies dead.

The OSA recruit only those with strict mental discipline and grim determination. This sounded perfect for me, so I enlisted right away. During the intensive three year training period I chose only those skills that would further my mastery in the psionic field. Who needs brawn when the brain can do so much?

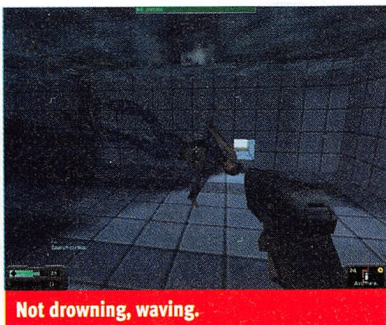
Early aboard the Von Braun I came to realise that PSI powers were mighty indeed. Cyrokinesis negated the need for any standard weapons - acting perfectly as a dangerous projectile offensive measure. With this single psionic discipline I could easily fell hybrids, take out security cameras from the safety of cover, even similarly destroying those dangerous turrets found all over the starship. In this way, I found that I was playing much like a marine would - with my PSI amp in place of an unreliable sidearm.

Other psionic benefits included the ability to heal myself, or temporarily boost one of my core stats (like strength or agility). I could even create a dampener around my body which absorbed some of the damage directed towards me during the many skirmishes.

After reaching the engineering section of the Von Braun however, I discovered that my career as a PSI-Master was coming to a premature end. With a lack of PSI hypos (the energy used when using PSI skills), I found myself constantly low on PSI points. So I was forced to learn some basic marine and tech skills to supplement the use of PSI skills. Oddly enough, much further into my adventure on the Von Braun I found an abundance of PSI hypos.

Of the 40 or so psionic "spells" available, the vast majority aim at temporarily enhancing your other skills - especially the marine and tech skills. Thus, you'll find it much easier (and more enjoyable) if you temper your PSI character with other disciplines (like that of the hacker and marine). For the ultimate challenge - try playing through System Shock 2 with nothing but PSI skills.

March Stepnik



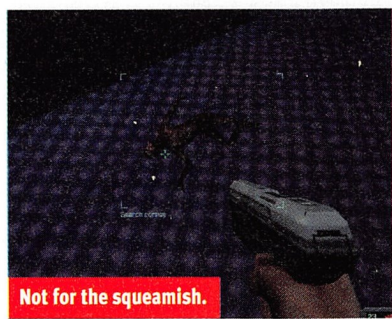
Not drowning, waving.

sterile Hydroponics deck is filled with small laboratories and countless racks of Earth flora, and the gaudy Recreation deck boasts a shopping mall and entertainment sector. In isolation, the various decks feel like they're part of something much bigger. Consequently, travelling through successive decks gives you a genuine sensation of being on a colossal spaceship.

### "Are we joined?"

System Shock 2's immersive gameplay and ingenious plot take you on an emotional roller coaster ride that you don't ever want to get off. One moment you're ecstatic after vanquishing a formidable assailant. In the next, the terrifying sights that greet you aboard the Von Braun pierce your heart with icicles of fear. You'll gasp in awe at the extraordinary, and be moved to tears by insights into the day to day lives, desires and fates of the Von Braun's occupants. Games of this calibre are truly a rarity, but this only makes you appreciate them more. System Shock 2 is less of a game and more of a phenomenal sensory experience. Buy it now. ■

Brett Robinson



Not for the squeamish.

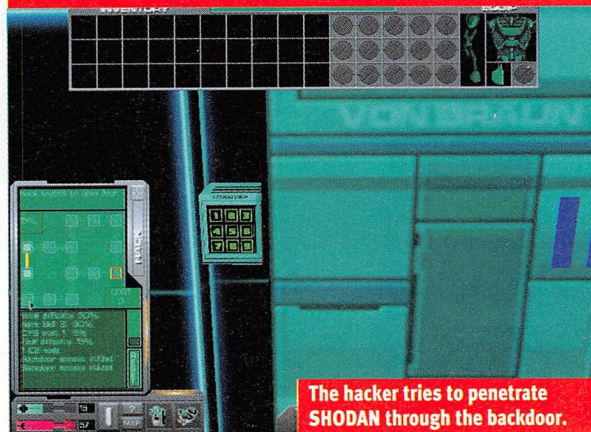


PCPP

**FOR:** The complete game, invested with a thought-provoking scenario, touching details, intense action, and a genuinely terrifying atmosphere. Brilliant use of sound.

**AGAINST:** High difficulty level. No multiplayer option - yet...

## CAN YOU HACK IT?



The hacker tries to penetrate SHODAN through the backdoor.

Joining the Navy puts you on a technically-inclined career path. In my early mission postings I opted for training my hacking, research and general cyber-affinity. Beginning with a proficient Hack skill was incredibly useful; those security computers became a piece of cake to shut down, allowing ample opportunity to destroy cameras with one swipe of the wrench and, once I'd reached a skill level of four, to hack into the laser turrets. The latter proved a lifesaver on more than one occasion, as it turned the turrets - which would otherwise have ripped me apart - against my enemies. As I was only able to handle standard weapons, the Maintenance skill meant even the basic pistol I was packing could take down a hybrid with ease - well, relative ease. All guns tend to wear surprisingly quickly, so being able to keep them in decent condition is essential.

Thanks to the Research skill, studying the organs I extracted from felled creatures enabled their weak spots to be identified (or, in a more prosaic sense, increase the amount of damage I inflicted upon them). After attaining the more advanced levels of Research, I could search the wreckage of various robots for repair modules that act as healing agents. Being a wimpy hacker, the best route to success is simply to stay out of trouble. Disabling every security computer, hacking every replicator, hiding in the shadows, and making heavy use of the walk function are the ways to properly role-play the Navy character.

David Wildgoose

**PLUS**

[www.thecodex.com/hacking.html](http://www.thecodex.com/hacking.html)

One of the best internet hacking resources. Hundreds of links to interesting sites and useful programs. Look out for Shodan.

The World's Greatest Hacking Links

Explains

Thousands are interested in this great tutorial resource

Digital Detective Workshop

The World's Greatest Hacking Links

98



# DARKSTONE

●Genre: Dungeon Hack ●Players: 1-4 ●Developer: Delphine ●Publisher: Gathering Of Developers ●Distributor: Jack Of All Games ●Price: \$79.95 ●Rating: MA ●Available: Now  
 ●Need: P233, 32MB RAM, 170MB HDD, 8xCD, 3D graphics card (D3D) ●Want: PII 300, 64MB RAM, 300MB HDD ●URL: <http://www.godgames.com/games/darkstone/>

The only game that features more hacking than System Shock 2.

## TIPS

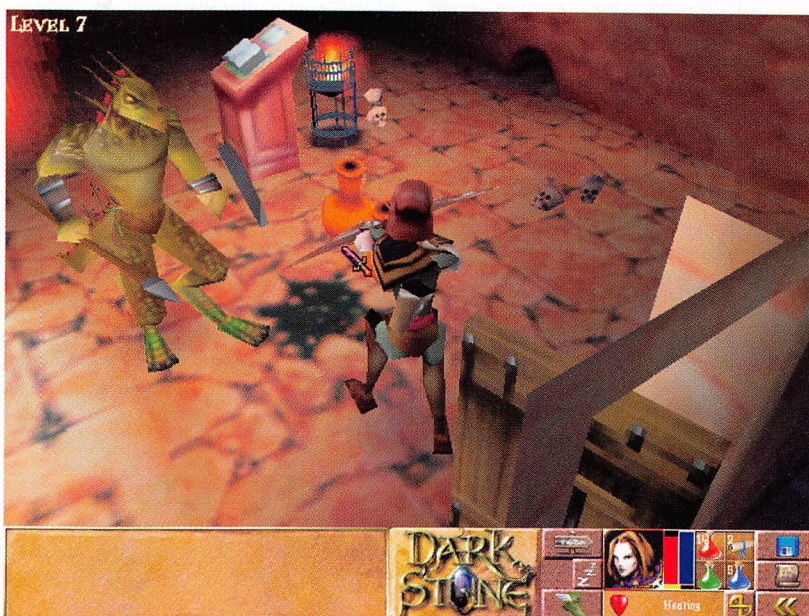
• The four character types in the game are markedly varied. When creating characters at the commencement of play, make sure your chosen duo hail from different classes - an obvious point, perhaps, but it's vital that you take as much advantage as possible of the range of talents available.

• Once the classes have been selected, allocate the first lot of skill points - and this goes for any subsequently gained experience - to that character's primary ability. That is, pour all your Assassin's points into his Dexterity, or all your Wizard's points into his Magic, etc. Specialisation is crucial.



## METABOLIC PHENOMENON

Food - and the provision of such meals - provides a bit of light relief to the constant death and destruction to be witnessed on your travels. The characters that comprise your party all possess the most astonishing appetite yet seen in a computer game - with the possible exception of Pacman. In a slice of design reminiscent of Ultima VII, every few minutes one of your charges will bellow a demand to be fed. And you'll have to oblige each time by opening the inventory and right-clicking on a mushroom or apple or hunk of chicken. Now, ensuring your characters don't starve is a consideration deemed acceptable for an RPG (no matter how boring and trivial it may seem), but is it really necessary to feed them by hand?



What a cosy pad - there's a pedestal, reading light, urn, and even a few decorative skulls!

Darkstone is just so unashamed in its adherence to the no-frills hack 'n' slash ethic that you can feel nothing but admiration. You may even start to appreciate the fact that your home town is merely referred to as "Town", and that the various dungeons to be explored bear the perfunctory assignments "Level 1", "Level 2", "Level 3", etc. Delphine have reasoned, perhaps not without some merit, that anything more descriptive would be an unnecessary overcomplication.

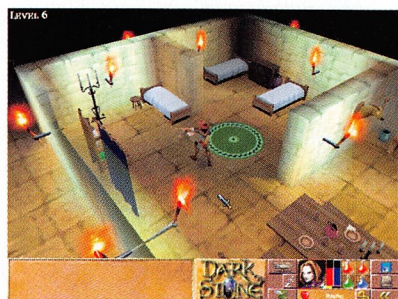
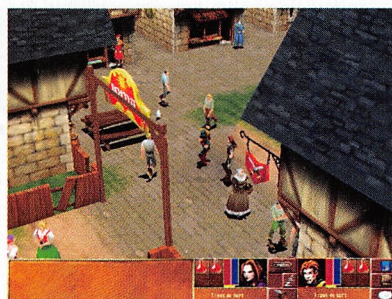
## Dead Monks

Your journey throughout the lands will entail visiting a number of villages and interacting with the locals in a series of one-sided conversations. In your home town, for instance, everyone is desperately keen to relate the events surrounding the horrific deaths of some monks at a nearby monastery, while the residents of the next village

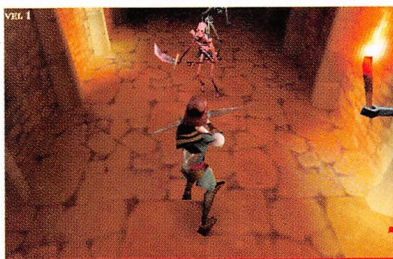
all request that you venture into the caves around the corner to recover some lost horn. Sadly, the dialogue doesn't so much flesh out the game world as simply signpost what you should be doing next.

A plot does exist in here somewhere, but it's so threadbare that each new narrative revelation is less surprising than the fact that Delphine actually bothered to continue with it to the end. Maybe I'm being overly harsh - Darkstone doesn't pretend to emulate an Ultima game (albeit with one exception, see Metabolic Phenomenon). Instead, it's an obvious attempt to update Diablo with 3D polygons and a more complex skill system.

Four character classes are available to choose from, each with their own male and female variants (though there's nothing to distinguish the sexes besides their appearance). Characters are initially







The bow is effective even at close range.



This old wizard's eyesight is clearly falling.

## "...your time will be spent trekking from one dungeon to the next."

differentiated via their skills, while the accumulation of experience points from killing monsters and completing quests will allow the improvement of the basic abilities such as Strength, Magic, Dexterity and Vitality.

### Zoom zoom

Departures from the Diablo formula are few and far between, with only some of them adding to the gameplay. The addition of a rotatable 3D view is worthy of mention. Quite frankly, it's a little pointless, and not only because the default camera already affords what is easily the most playable view. Zoom in and enemy creatures will be able to stage startlingly effective ambushes; zoom out and, illustrating the legitimate programming shortcuts taken to achieve a decent framerate, a black fog descends over the play area to the obvious detriment of the game's sense of place.

On purely aesthetic terms, Darkstone's vivid colours and large polygon models are attractive. Having said that, there's a real samey-ness to so many of the locations with most dungeons consisting of section after section of replica corridors and rooms.

And, I think, the cartoon look just takes an edge off the atmosphere and in doing so, unfortunately, serves to

highlight the simplistic and repetitive nature of the action.

### Quick on the click

For the most part, the action in question is a case of frantically clicking on an enemy until it collapses in a blood-smattered heap. Once combat victory has been assured, your recently felled foe will deposit all his gold and useable items in a neat pile next to his corpse. One minor bug occurs with this, though: the treasure from any enemy vanquished in close proximity to a wall will often appear on the other side of said impenetrable collection of sandstone.

When not pre-occupied with the besting hordes of creatures with your sword, bow, mace or fireball, there's precious little else to retain your attention. Typically confined to variations on the olde lever-pulling guesswork, the puzzles thus prove to be rarely challenging. Much of the rest of your time will be spent trekking from one dungeon to the next, via some fairly nondescript interlude environments, and back to town to stock up on supplies and receive some skills training.

### Skillful characters

Where Darkstone does genuinely differ from Diablo is in offering the opportunity to control two characters simultaneously and the introduction of more advanced skills. The former offers a decent impersonation of multiplayer gaming for the single player, but complete success is denied by a

## YOU'RE A PERCEPTIVE EXORCIST

The skill system present in Darkstone hints at a level of gameplay depth that might not be immediately obvious. Besides the usual Strength, Dexterity, etc, each character class has a unique array of secondary skills to learn and master. The Warrior can gain advantages to his combat and scouting abilities through the Repair or Forester skills, while the Thief specialises in handling traps and items as well as several stealth-oriented talents like Silence and Theft. The two spellcasting classes tend to major in techniques to improve their magic - the Sorceress being capable of turning into a werewolf (Lycanthropy) or replenishing magic items (Recharge), the Priest calling upon the powers of the divine in Prayer, Medicine or Exorcism.



cumbersome interface and somewhat unpredictable companion AI. Enhancing the experience to a greater extent are those extra skills that further differentiate the character classes and go some way to creating a unique adventure for each (see You're A Perceptive Exorcist).

To fully enjoy Darkstone you must wait for the right mood to strike. When that bloody-minded feeling hits, the dungeon-crawling gameplay has just enough of an addictive pull to keep you up all night; when it doesn't, however, the monotonous hack 'n' slash (not to mention having to constantly feed your voracious heroes, the big babies) can feel mind-numbingly tedious. ■

David Wildgoose

**PLUS**

[www.paganpath.com](http://www.paganpath.com)  
Tread the Pagan Path, meet fellow magical people, read the Book of Shadows, and take the Witchy Quiz!



PCPP

**FOR:** The dungeon-crawling RPG distilled to its essence. A well-designed skill system provides some much-needed depth.

**AGAINST:** The dungeon-crawling RPG distilled to its essence also makes for a frequently dull experience. The 3D engine is quite limited.

68



# JAGGED ALLIANCE 2

●Genre: Role Playing Strategy ●Players: 1 ●Developer: Sirtech ●Publisher: Talonsoft ●Distributor: Directsoft ●Price: TBA ●Rating: TBA ●Available: Now  
 ●Need: P133, 16MB RAM, 300MB HDD, 4x CDROM ●Want: P200, 64MB RAM, 500MB HDD, 8x CDROM ●URL: www.jaggedalliance.com

No, we're not sure what Jagged Alliance means either - but, hey, it's a great game!



## TIPS

- Throughout the course of the game, try not to waste time. As the number of expired mission days reaches 40, you'll receive increasingly urgent emails from Enrico. No matter how strong your militias are, Deidranna's forces will recapture all mining towns on day 40. When this happens, your flow of income will grind to a halt and you'll have to fight to retake the mining towns.
- When fighting in territory heavily occupied by enemy forces, have most of your team travel in the prone position. Use your least valuable (or least injured) team member as a forward spotter for the rest of the team. It's a slow process, but a much safer one in the long run. (see pic below)
- Lastly, always try to take the high ground when in battle. Firing from rooftops will tip the odds in your favour.



A lot of gamers unknowingly owe Sirtech, the creators of the original Jagged Alliance, a debt of gratitude. Its addictive and ingenious gameplay paved the way for best selling titles like Fallout and Fallout 2. In developing Jagged Alliance 2, Sirtech have delivered a product that is, in many respects, superior to both its ancestor and the Fallout series.

## Political intrigue

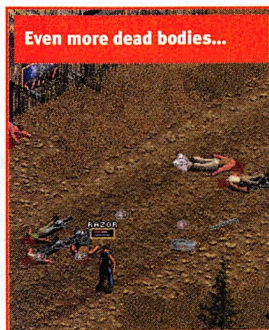
This time around, the game is set on the tiny island nation of Arulco. Arulco was once a peaceful and prosperous nation ruled by Enrico Chivaldori, a wise and compassionate man. Enrico's wife, Deidranna, masterminded a plan that saw Enrico implicated in the murder of his own father. En route to the court, Deidranna's men staged an unsuccessful attempt on Enrico's life. He escaped to Eastern Europe, where he went into hiding, while Deidranna seized power and declared Martial Law. Arulco's economy now lies in tatters, its



population destitute. Deidranna's sizeable army uses violence and terror to keep Arulco's people in line. Seeing his people suffer from afar, Enrico knows he must be returned to power. Rather than let Judge Judy rule on the matter, he hires a band of mercenaries whom he hopes will shatter Deidranna's army and restore peace in Arulco. The player assumes control of those mercenaries, the fate of a nation resting on their shoulders.



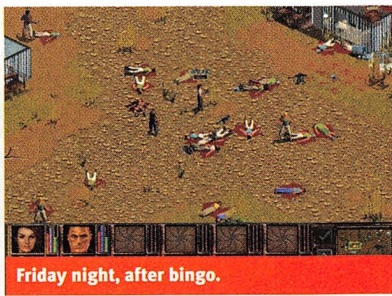
Even more dead bodies...



## LIE PRONE & TARGET EYES

Combat is a suspenseful and very exciting aspect of the game. Its turn-based nature and wide variety of character orders will appeal to strategy fans wanting precise control over the movements of their charges. Aside from gaining control of valuable mines, players who conquer insurmountable odds are often rewarded with especially rare weapons found on the bodies of their opponents.





## Where's the gypsy?

Before entering the game, the player is given the opportunity to create a custom character. This is standard RPG fare, though the extent to which a character's base attributes can be improved is governed by the character's personality profile. This is determined by the player's answers to sixteen peculiar multiple-choice questions. One such question asks the player to select the car bumper sticker they deem most fit for their own vehicle. Answers range from the standard 'Peace', to the far more entertaining 'Keep honking, I'm reloading'. The player is then given a limited amount of money with which to hire a team of mercenaries. With over one hundred mercenaries available for hire, skill levels and salary demands vary significantly. In the early stages of the game, the player is limited to hiring relatively mediocre personnel, but can secure the services of more skilled operatives as the financial situation improves.

## Here kitty-kitty

As a result of several similar characteristics, fans of Fallout will be immediately comfortable with JA2's appearance. Although the graphics aren't by any means cutting edge, they're extremely detailed in subtle ways that can't be discerned at first glance. Each and every mercenary looks unique (right down to the clothes they're wearing), walks with a different gait and carries their weapon in a particular fashion. The animation of mercenaries and non-player characters (NPCs) is perfect. Even Blood Cats, lion-like creatures that roam Arulco's plains, move with a feline grace that is at once breathtaking and terrifying. On a purely unconscious level, the appeal of JA2's visuals increases over time, a true hallmark of good game design.

## Sound advice

Sound is also extremely impressive, with weapons of vary calibres making

**"Instead, they've decomposed and become food for flocks of ravens.."**

different noises when fired. Automatic weapons chatter, sniper rifles crack and shotguns roar. The loud thud of a high velocity bullet smacking into a rock beside a mercenary's head will make even the most composed player wince (*Not to mention when it hits his head - Ed*). When the player's team comes under attack, it's even possible to determine the type of weapon that the enemy is firing, purely by the sound of the report.

## Comic relief

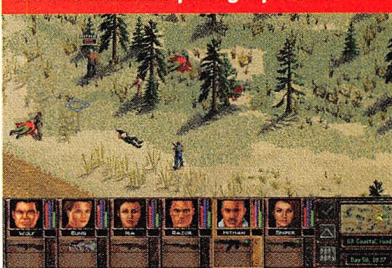
In JA2, humour is one resource that's never in short supply. Most mercenaries possess an impressive repertoire of sarcastic remarks suitable for any occasion. Some even make light of otherwise stomach churning situations. In typical Duke Nukem-esque style, one merc muttered 'That's the quick way to lose 10 pounds' in response to the sickening explosion of a foe's head. Further evidence of the care that has gone into making this game manifests itself in totally unexpected ways. Players who, several days later, return to the scene of a battle will find that the bodies of fallen combatants haven't magically disappeared. Instead, they've decomposed and become food for flocks of ravens; undeniably disturbing, but equally thrilling, as it illustrates the way in which the developers resisted the temptation to take common design shortcuts.

# WHAT'S MINE(D) IS YOURS

Captured mines are the player's chief source of income. Funds gleaned from mining can be used to hire additional mercenaries, or purchase weapons and supplies. Mines can't be guarded 24/7, and are subject to reprisal raids from Deidranna's forces. Villagers can be trained to form militias, which then guard mines and surrounding areas. Militias cost little money to train, but training them takes several days. It's up to the player to find a delicate balance between time spent training militias, and time spent maintaining equipment, travelling, sleeping and capturing other towns.



## The RPG mushroom picking expedition.



## It's in the details

Jagged Alliance 2 can be summed up in one word: 'Detail'. The sheer amount of it is almost incomprehensible. While players new to this style of game may initially suffer from information overload, perseverance yields huge rewards. JA2 is so addictive that playing it takes precedent over work, food, social interaction and exercise. Were it not for a number of infuriating bugs, JA2 would be a 90%+ game. ■

Brett Robinson

PCPP

**FOR:** Remarkably successful blending of turn-based strategy and role-playing elements. Immense post-apocalyptic Mad Max style atmosphere.

**AGAINST:** Could seem too overwhelming to begin with, especially for the novice gamer. Slightly dated visual appearance may put off some.





# FORCE 21



●Genre: Strategy ●Players: 1-4 ●Developer: Red Storm Entertainment ●Publisher: Take 2 ●Distributor: Jack Of All Games ●Price: \$TBA ●Rating: G8  
●Available: Now ●Need: P200, 32MB RAM ●Want: P266, 64MB RAM ●URL: www.redstorm.com

A flashy war sim with plenty of depth.

PCPP  
GOLD



## TIPS

• You won't have much time to deploy before the enemy starts probing your forces. Occupy the high ground around your start point as quickly as you can - dispatch some electronic warfare vehicles if you have them. Give them some protection and set them to radar mode. While your recon is shaking out, have the remainder of your forces dig in or deploy camouflage. Air attack is a real threat at the start of some missions. Avoid the temptation to cover everything and spread your forces too thinly. When defending, determine the enemy's most likely approach and make your stand. In the advance, cover your flanks and advance on one or two axis. In either case, try to hold a small but powerful force in reserve. You may need to steal assets from existing platoons to do so.

Force 21 is based on the force structures emerging from ongoing US Army future warfighting experiments. 2015 finds the West propping up a once powerful Russia, while an expansionist China is flexing its muscles in Kazakhstan. Former cold-war enemies join forces to contain China and protect Kazakh sovereignty in a situation where the cost of failure may be WW III.

### Multi-national forces

You have been deployed to the Sino-Kazakh border in command of an

impressive array of current and future weapon systems. Fifteen missions are provided for each side, with the force mix gradually expanding to include armour, recon, electronic warfare systems and engineer assets. Multi-national forces make for some spectacular situations, as Abrams tanks and BRDMs deploy together for battle. Additional firepower is provided by artillery, attack helicopters and close air support, all of which must be co-ordinated and protected. Lots of artillery - it must be good!

### Superb interface

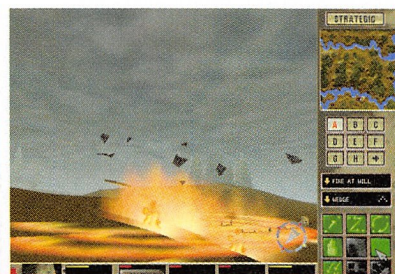
Force 21's interface provides the best level of situational awareness I've seen in a game of this type - and it's matched by a superb feel in the tactical screens. The terrain that confronts your lead elements is just as you pictured it while making plans on the 3D strategic map. Missions revolve around four key phases. The Briefing Phase provides an overview of the operational situation and outlines mission objectives. Listen carefully, because much of the information is not



Step 1: Sneak up on the tanks.

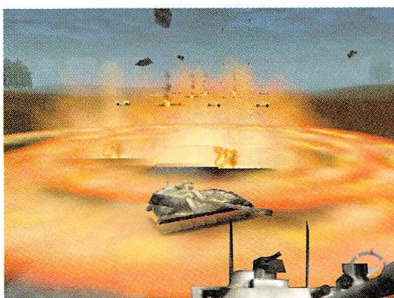


Step 2: Drop loads of bombs



Step 3: Fly away really fast.





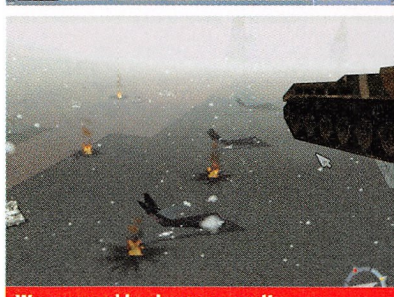
accessible once the mission begins, and some of the briefings are light on detail.

## Phase: Setup

Force 21 shines in the Setup Phase. Platoon commanders can be chosen based on personality and experience, and the default force mix can be modified. It's an innovative and realistic aspect of the game, with the choices made up front having a major bearing on mission performance. Although penny-packeting capabilities such as armour and helicopters inevitably leads to disaster, 'judicious re-jigging' of platoon structures can be decisive. The Intelligence Phase provides a summary of likely enemy strength, intentions and dispositions, as well as placing mission objectives in a strategic context. The intelligence is sketchy at best, and things will rarely pan out as expected. This phase could be improved by including a detailed terrain brief and optional access to the wide range of intelligence assets likely to be available in 2015.

## Phase: Action

The Action Phase is where your brilliant plan succeeds or fails. The interface here is incredibly flexible. Routes and platoon formations can be specified, and force mixes can be changed to reflect the developing situation. No need to jump around, as



War-ravaged landscapes - cool!

Tanks for the chance to use a terrible pun.

the key information is displayed in all screens, and issuing orders is as simple as point and click. It is spoilt by some silly AI glitches though, with vehicles banging into each other at times. Rules of engagement can be assigned to platoons at any time, as well as orders to dig in or camouflage. Once again, making the right choices is critical; a dug-in platoon will survive longer, but you trade off mobility. The range of options gives you a genuine chance to shape the battlefield as you co-ordinate the forces available. Although players can specify targets during an engagement, platoons will fight independently once tasked. Let them get on with it! This is war, and sometimes commanders will be

**"I know it's 2015, but I think we'll still need bayonets to finish the job."**

left in the dark. You may have no idea what destroyed your forward elements until the next platoon blunders into the same ambush or minefield. Great stuff!

## Recon-friendly

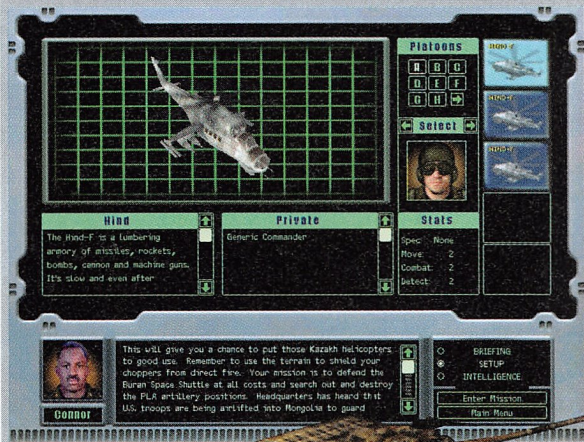
Force 21 makes you fight for information. Find and fix the enemy then call in artillery and air support. Deploy bridge-layers to force river crossings, and use your electronic warfare assets to disrupt enemy command and control. The action can be observed in all its stunning 3D glory by a panning camera view that, realistically, won't let you see the rest of the battlefield.

## Premature deployment

Okay, it can't all be great.

## HELOS ARE SEXY & DANGEROUS

Devastating in both attack and defence when used correctly, attack helicopters make excellent clay pigeons if mis-employed. The strategic map in Force 21 is a great guide to the terrain you will encounter at the tactical level. Use it to select safe routes for your helos, and look for good ambush points where they can hide behind a feature and pop-up for a quick engagement before ducking down again. You'll be tempted to let them lead the advance - don't. Use ground recon to identify potential targets, and then employ a combination of artillery and your helos to make the kill.



Having sold us on the idea of detailed planning and force selection, the missions don't allow enough time to deploy before the hordes arrive. Some of the



I'll just hide under this tank.

missions border on the 'last man standing wins' variety, and the linear nature of the campaigns will turn some players off. More battlefield obscurity would also be good - the more smoke the better, and the maps could provide more information. If a village is part of an objective, then it should be on the strategic map. No infantry! I know it's 2015, but I think we'll still need bayonets to finish the job.

## Actiontastic!

Those points aside, you won't be disappointed with Force 21. The action is realistic, fast and spectacular to watch. Action is why we pay out the dollars, and most players will consider it money well spent on this game. The minor problems are fixable. I'm already waiting for the mission disk! ■

Major Des McNicholas

## PLUS

SUGGESTED READING Paul Virilio's "Pure War", the French critical philosopher's discussion of how the technology and logistics of war have infected - and constitute - modern society.



PCPP

**FOR:** Terrific situational awareness. Fast paced action and superb graphics. A very simple, intuitive interface. You will master the mechanics of this game very quickly.

**AGAINST:** The odd dodgy mission briefing. Not enough time to deploy at the start of missions. Linear campaigns. No infantry.

90



# THE OPERATIONAL ART OF WAR II

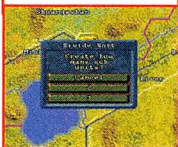
## Modern Battles 1956-2000

●Genre: Turn-Based Wargame ●Players: 1-2 ●Developer: Talonsoft ●Publisher: Talonsoft ●Distributor: Jack Of All Games ●Price: \$69.95 ●Rating: G8+ ●Available: Now  
 ●Need: P133, 16MB RAM ●Want: P200, 32MB RAM ●URL: www.talonsoft.com

War is art?

### TIPS

**DIVIDE & CONQUER**  
 Your forces will generally fight best when deployed as formed units. They may divide into sub-units, such as companies or squadrons, as a result of combat or due to the disorganisation caused whenever units are inserted by air or sea. At times, you may be forced to divide units in order to cover a large area of ground or to protect a piece of key terrain. Remember that dividing and recombining units has a permanent detrimental effect on the unit's proficiency, and that they are more likely to be forced into reorganisation after combat. Always check to see if any of your units can be re-combined at the start of your turn.



The markers betray its board game origins.

The Operational Art of War set a new standard in computer war gaming. At first glance, it seemed unlikely to set the world on fire. It featured turn-based, cardboard-like counters and a seemingly dated interface. But it had depth - realistic combat models, a genuine attempt to simulate the role of logistics in war, and a clean break from the essentially tactical

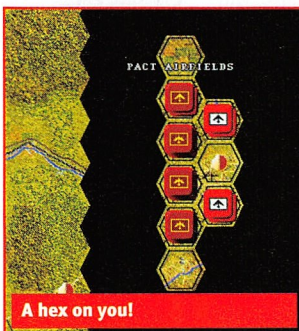
gameplay seen in most of its predecessors. It let the beer and pretzel brigade have some fairly realistic fun, as well as satisfying the hard-core gamer's desire for intricate detail.

TOAW 2 carries on in that tradition. So much so, in fact, that some buyers will question whether this is a new game or just a campaign disk. The interface is identical, and the manual is word for

word with TOAW in some areas.

### Enhanced combat resolution

There are changes, obviously! Combat resolution now models the effect of individual weapon systems, rather than aggregating and comparing combat factors. The result should be more realistic outcomes, and a better representation of the relative capabilities of units in combat. Tanks,



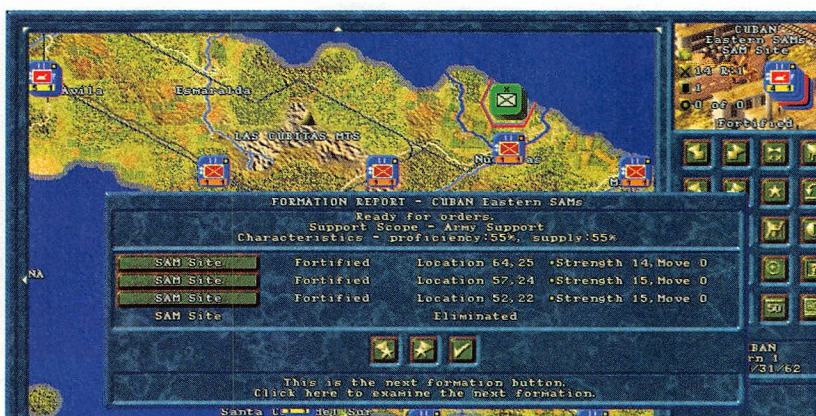
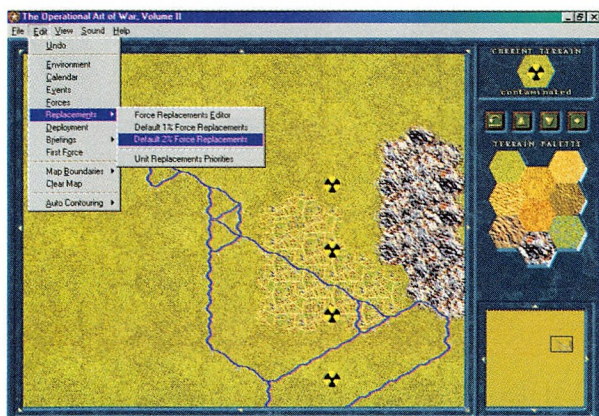
### CHANGE OF SCENERY

A strong core of the original game, the Scenario Editor is also unchanged on the surface in TOAW 2; although the database of available weapon systems have been dramatically expanded to reflect the modern era from 1956-2000.

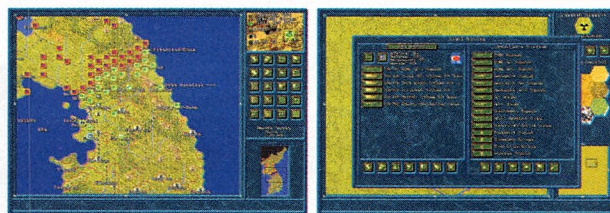
Historical campaigns range from the Arab-Israeli wars to Desert Storm, and the hypothetical options include the inevitable NATO-Warsaw Pact, as well as Korea and

Kashmir. No small-scale campaigns amongst that lot - a couple of shorter scenarios along the lines of Crete in the first TOAW would have been useful for novices. The degree of flexibility in scenario design is remarkable. Draw the map, specify orders of battle, deploy the forces and determine turn lengths, time of day and environmental conditions. If your map is large enough it can contain up to three climate zones - serious stuff this!





The Cuban conflict pauses for another thrilling window.



"Old hands, particularly those with a bent for detail, will be impressed..."

Those trees don't seem to offer much camouflage.

for example, are far more difficult to stop, and the effect of air support has been significantly enhanced.

The new model aims to prevent some of the obviously absurd outcomes seen in TOAW 1, and makes the most of the processing power computers provide. The manual includes extensive information on calculations used to resolve combat and determine the subsequent proficiency of units.

## Training wheels

Mastering the interface has been eased a little by the addition of a basic rule set that allows new players to ignore a host of complex factors until they feel more confident. Remarkably though, this improvement is offset by the fact that Talonsoft have done away with the tutorial! This is a daunting game for newcomers, a tutorial would have definitely helped!

Talonsoft's focus on veteran players is further emphasised by a manual that devotes almost fifty pages to weapons data and only one and a half to game hints. What were they thinking?



## Air mobility

The most obvious change in TOAW2 is the improved treatment of air power. In particular, the introduction of helicopters adds a new dimension to the game. Air mobility permits a genuinely manoeuvre based approach to some of the scenarios, in which you can attack the enemy's centre of gravity (COG) and get inside their decision cycle to such an extent that they become purely reactive to your actions.

Realistically, the side that can combine air superiority with a strong airmobile capability has a significant advantage, regardless of the overall force ratios between the opponents. Watch out for a few bugs in the air mobility department, all of which seem to have been fixed in the most recent patch already available.

## If it ain't broke...

Given the quality of the original game engine, minimal change isn't necessarily a bad thing. The sheer scale of TOAW 2 remains impressive. Unit sizes run from company groups to entire corps, and the area of operations ranges from a few kilometres to whole continents.

The fact that you can fight each

battle consecutively, permitting battle damage assessment (BDA) before committing to another assault is a strong point, and the inclusion of strategic considerations through the expanded Event Editor adds a realistic level of complexity to command at the operational level. No point executing your brilliant left hook if it brings Russia into the war!

## Incremental improvements

Recognising that many of the changes are hidden in the combat model is probably the key to being happy with handing over the cash for TOAW 2. Old hands, particularly those with a bent for detail, will be more than impressed with what remains a great game by any standards.

New players will get good value from TOAW 2 too, especially once the proposed expansion packs broaden the variety of campaigns that can be fought without having to design the whole thing from the ground up. Recent events in Europe offer obvious, and welcome, potential.

Essentially, TOAW 2 offers incremental improvements on what was already an excellent system. ■

Major Des McNicholas

PCPP

**FOR:** Improvements on a great system. Fantastic scenario editor. Terrific cut scenes. Still the best game around for serious wargamers.

**AGAINST:** Owners of the original may not think it's worth the price. Some shorter scenarios would be good. The 3D view!

**PLUS**

[www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Garden/9609/SunTzu/SunTzu.htm](http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Garden/9609/SunTzu/SunTzu.htm)  
A fascinating web site focused on the infamous Chinese philosopher, Sun Tzu. Features a manner of sections, including "Encouraging quotes and excerpts" and "jokes".

**84**



# MIG ALLEY

● Genre: Historical Flight Sim

● Players: 1-8 ● Developer: Rowan Software ● Publisher: Empire Interactive ● Distributor: Metro ● Price: \$TBA ● Rating: G ● Available: Now  
 ● Need: P200, 64MB RAM ● Want: PI350, 128MB RAM ● URL: www.empireflight.co.uk

Fly by the seat of your pants in this quality flight sim.

**PCPP  
GOLD**

**"With over a hundred aircraft to manage, things are busy!"**



The chase-view - one for all the arcade gamers out there.

Right up front, MIG Alley has a quality feel to it. The depth of this game hits you as soon as you enter the mission-planning screen. So much so, that it's a little daunting at first. Five campaigns are on offer, as well as fast paced Hot Shot and Quick Missions. The entire war is covered in the course of the campaigns, from the North Korean invasion in June 1950, to the signing of the armistice three years later.

## Not for beginners

Providing situational awareness in a flight sim is difficult at the best of times - doubly so when things are barreling along near the speed of sound in a time when radar locks and HUDs don't exist. Rowan gets around the problem though a combination of a padlock view, peripheral vision markers and an optional threat indicator. I'm not sure they've done enough for new players. Although it grows on you after a while, the padlock view is difficult to master and a confusing range of view options doesn't help the novice. Add some fairly average handbook detail and the net result is a lot of frustration in the early missions. Although helpful, the threat indicator doesn't clearly indicate the chosen target - why not just permit target lock and use an arrow to indicate direction like most other sims?

## Throttle your prop

But how does it fly? The flight model is superb, with a host of options available to ease the load until confidence kicks in. MIG Alley feels great from the cockpit. Nudge up the throttle and the difference between a prop and a jet is suddenly very clear. Drop the fuel tanks before combat and you're floating on air. The damage modelling is first rate, with aircraft becoming progressively more difficult to fly, and the lack of modern systems means that you won't always know what's wrong.

## Dynamic campaigns

In the final campaign, Spring Offensive, the whole strategy is up for grabs. As the Front Line Air Commander, your job is to develop a plan that will support the ground offensive against the Communists. Using the wealth of information provided in the planning screen, you



Dial M for MIG.

have to identify targets, allocate aircraft from the seven squadrons under your command, select routes and designate attack patterns. With over a hundred aircraft to manage, things are busy! Sorting out the strike group is complex enough once casualties start to mount, but aircraft also have to be allocated to escort and flak suppression duties. Poor weather can lead to the loss of time and cancellation of missions, making the job tougher still. MIG Alley has a genuinely dynamic campaign structure, meaning the odd mission failure is OK, but the task of winning the campaign is that much tougher.

## We have a winner

This is a difficult game to fault. Rowan have improved on just about every aspect of their earlier releases to produce a real winner. The balance between straight-out flight sim and strategy game makes MIG Alley a great buy. No doubt this will seem a tough one for beginners, but the learning curve is short enough and it's well worth the effort. ■

Major Des McNicholas



**PLUS**  
<http://rt66.com/~korteng/SmallArms/arms.htm>  
 More info about the Korean War than you could possibly need to know.

**PCPP**

**FOR:** A great mix of strategy and tactics. Superb flight model and a first class planning system. Good mix of mission types.

**AGAINST:** Awkward default key setup and range of view options. Let down by a lack of detail in the handbook - little things, like: How do I land this sucker?

**92**



# CASTROL HONDA SUPERBIKES 2000



● Genre: Racing sim ● Players: 1-6 ● Developer: Midas ● Publisher: Interactive Entertainment ● Distributor: Playcorp ● Price: \$TBA ● Rating: G ● Available: Now  
 ● Need: P200MMX, 32MB RAM, 100 HDD Space, 4xCDROM ● Want: PIII350, 64MB RAM, 150 HDD Space, 3D Accelerator ● URL: [www.interactive-entertainment.co.uk](http://www.interactive-entertainment.co.uk)

It's not quite the Evel Kenievel sim we always wanted... but close enough!

Mick Doohan said it all, prior to his incident at Jerez: "You accept crashes and injuries are part of this sport". A broken leg, wrist, collarbone, and extensive muscle damage later he was quoted saying: "Hopefully I can have the broken bones plated and screwed to speed up the healing, I want to get back on the bike soon." What a guy! It's this spirit and determination that is required in order to tame the RVF-RC45 500cc beast that lies between your legs in the latest creation from Midas, Castrol Honda Superbike 2000 (CHSB2000).

## Take 2

Hot on the heels of its previous incarnation of the same name minus the 2000 bit, CHSB2000s gives mere mortals the opportunity to mix it with the best as the newest virtual recruits of the Castrol Honda Superbike team. Loosely based on the World Superbike championships, CHSB2000 stands apart from any bike sim to date by placing the emphasis on sim rather than game. A steep learning curve ensures longevity for the hardcore gamers, whilst newbie riders can adjust the difficulty levels via an extensive assortment of aids and realism settings to help ease into the experience.

At first glimpse, the graphics may seem a tad past their use-by date. Any resolution below 1024 x 768 appears somewhat blocky and pixelated, however, a decent 3D card, the right resolution, coupled with some grunt in the CPU department, and this baby is smooth as silk. New features like chrome rendering and lens-flare really add to the feel that you're actually riding a real bike on a real track, as opposed to a cardboard cutout, with painted backgrounds.

## Doohan to Jerez

All of the tracks from the first title have been included, combined with ten new challenges for those already familiar with the Castrol Honda series. New circuits include some real-life venues such as Monaco, Catalunya and the bane of Doohan, Jerez, to mention a few. Additionally, it appears that



The view commonly referred to as vomit-inducing...



Ah, now that's better!

**"Hit the brakes too early and it's lock-up city."**

when certain times are achieved at each track, it rewards you by unlocking a bonus camera angle or race mode, a feature increasingly popular in the games of today.

CHSB2000 sports four racing modes, from Trainer, in which you follow your Castrol team-mate around a the track, which helps you memorise the track while building confidence, to Championship mode, consisting of a full season. Team and driver titles to be vied for here, competing with anywhere from 4 to 24 other racers. Nothing is more fulfilling than crossing the finish line .02 seconds ahead of second place in a tightly contested battle. Remembering that this is motorbike racing, driver positions can change every corner, and to finish on top is an achievement indeed, especially at the tougher difficulty settings.

## 500cc monsters

The crucial element that makes or breaks any motor sim is the physics. Clearly the golden apple of the game, the physics engine realistically depicts throwing a 500cc monster around a racetrack. Get on the gas too early, and the rear end decides to flip in the opposite direction. Hit the brakes too hard and it's lock-up city. Suspension movement could have been improved, but it more than makes up for this in other areas.

With quite a few "motorbike" sims due for release in the coming months, all bidding for the number one spot, Castrol Honda Superbikes 2000 is most definitely in pole position. ■

Edward Fox

**PLUS**  
[www.castrol-honda.com](http://www.castrol-honda.com)  
 Check out the Official Castrol Honda team home page.

**PCPP**

**FOR:** Adjustable realism, provides playability for the hardcore and newbie. Physics engine is a real gem.

**AGAINST:** In any resolution under 1024 x 768 the visuals appear blocky and pixelated. Replays can't be saved. As for sound - only adequate.

**85**



# CLANS

● Genre: Action/Adventure Hack-fest ● Players: 1-2(TCP/IP) ● Developer: Strategy First ● Publisher: GT Interactive  
 ● Distributor: GT Interactive ● Price: \$TBA ● Rating: G8+ ● Available: Now ● Need: P90, 8MB RAM.  
 ● Want: P90, 16MB RAM ● URL: [www.strategyfirst.com](http://www.strategyfirst.com)

## Diablo cookie-cutter clone

Clans is the first obvious attempt at canning the Diablo essence and bringing it to the masses in a negligible new form. It's a Diablo rip-off, plain and simple. Surprisingly, it does fail to achieve the technological and gameplay benchmarks set by the two year old classic. Oh dear.

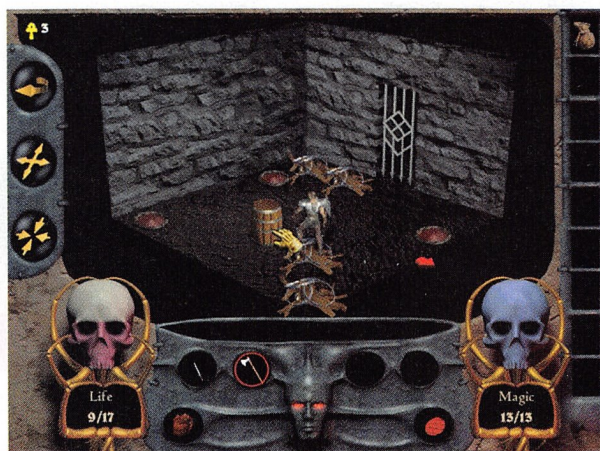
### Tolkien Shtick

The Clans storyline is your standard dungeons and dragons fare: four ancient races, or clans, have fought for centuries against an evil demon. In a nutshell, these clans send forth each a champion (accounting for character classes) to slap the demon and restore peace to the land.

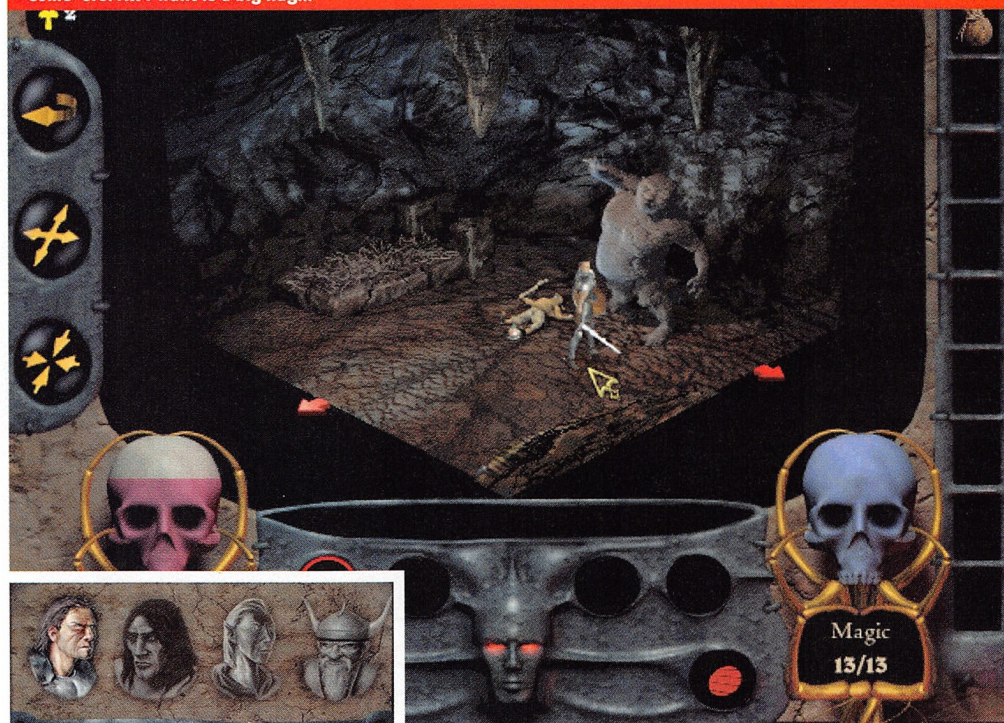
Gameplay can best be described as a role-playing adventure game. As in most RPGs, your choice of character class will have a profound impact upon the gameplay. Each race has a different set of abilities, which include strength, life force, agility, magic, sword, axe and lock picking ability. Unlike Diablo, there are no experience levels - whilst your abilities can be improved via new artefacts, your characters personal stats cannot be fundamentally improved beyond their basic levels. After you have chosen your race, players must venture through a series of tombs, slashing through hordes of demonic denizens and collecting various artefacts. But the game isn't only bog-standard slash-and-hack action. A considerable part of the gameplay involves solving a series of completely stupefying puzzles.

### Tedious

The main gameplay problem rests with the game's failure to produce an engaging storyline. After the laughably bad introduction video, very little happens to further develop the plot - the game degenerates into mundanity and repetition. Adventure games really need a dynamic environment and a developing plotline to keep the discerning gamer interested. The levels are mind numbingly boring, and usually involve all the typical RPG cliches, including lava, caves, etc. The monsters are all uncannily similar and the collection of canned noises does a good job of driving home the tedium.



"Come 'ere! All I want is a big hug..."



"...slap the demon and restore peace to the land."



The PowerPlay crew pose for a screenshot.

### Graphical Abomination

Clans utilises a dated graphics engine, featuring low-resolution visuals and an isometric perspective. In fact, Clans features graphics significantly inferior to Diablo. All of the backgrounds are fairly drab and the animation seriously limited. Even the central character moves like a slide show. The game uses a very simple mapping system for movement, with no screen scrolling. Your character has very restricted movement, and must enter adjacent areas by clicking on the animated arrows at the edge of the area. The flipside to the somewhat Spartan graphics is that people endowed with

comparatively obsolete machines will be able to enjoy the game without much slowdown.

### Unsatisfying rehash

In all, Clans is a deeply unsatisfying game. What really galls me is that Strategy First have merely attempted to rehash a game that is already over two years old - and that there has been no attempt to inject any originality into the venture. In a year which has already seen a rash of sub-standard sequels and dodgy rip-offs, it seems the retarded gameplay of Clans will be, tragically, more popular than ever. ■

Hugh Norton-Smith

**PLUS**

<http://www.blizzard.com>  
 Bugger that! Blizzard do it better. Go here for updated info on Diablo 2 (it's almost here!). You'd even be better off giving the original Diablo another whirl.



PCPP

**FOR:** Intuitive gameplay, low system requirements

**AGAINST:** Lacking plot, innovation and visual flash.

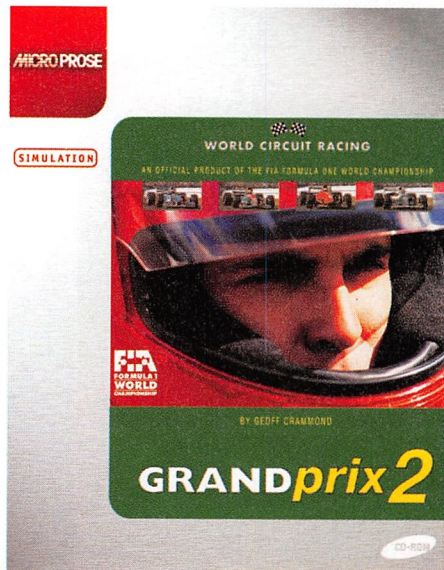
48



# Games Up Play

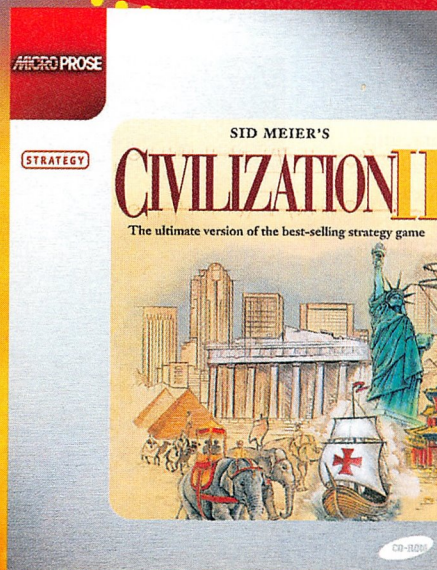
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## GRAND PRIX 2. (G).

If you've always dreamt of competing in a real formula one race, then strap yourself in and get ready for an adrenaline rush like you've never felt. The game includes every aspect of the real grand prix experience: in-depth car set-ups, practice and qualifying sessions as well as realistic world circuits, teams, drivers and engine makes.



## CIVILIZATION II (G).

Civilization is in your hands. Make every critical social, economic and political decision as you build an empire to span history. Use skill and strategy to command armies, influence historical events and negotiate with rival empires.



## FROGGER (G).

Immerse yourself in over 35 of Frogger's most addictive adventures, across nine spectacular and perilous 3D worlds! Use the Power Croak, Heat-Seeking Tongue and Super Jump to negotiate hostile environments and defeat malicious opponents.



## M1 TANK PLATOON 2 (G8+).

An intensely realistic ground warfare simulation that puts you in the heart of battle. Features realistic graphics, authentic vehicles, multi-player gameplay, map view and tactical reference encyclopedia.

G = General (all ages)  
G8+ = General (Recommended for persons 8 years and over)

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# FA PREMIER LEAGUE STARS

● Genre: Sports ● Players: 1-4 ● Developer: EA Sports ● Publisher: EA Sports ● Distributor: EA ● Price: \$TBA ● Rating: G ● Available: Now  
 ● Need: P166, 32MB RAM, 40MB HDD ● Want: P266, 64MB RAM, 3D video card ● URL: www.easports.com

It's another FIFA game, incognito!

FA Premier League Stars marks the fifth EA soccer title in a time frame of just under two years, and that's not counting the football titles from other developers on offer. Are we really in need of that many? The multitude of soccer sims out there begin to make sense after you consider the number of soccer fanatics present in the world, and their preferences.

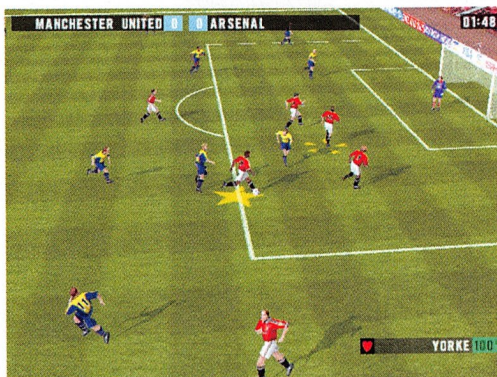
See, some prefer their soccer debauchery as light entertainment, with easy to master (and use) controls. Others are entranced by the strategy of football management, and go for the more spread-sheet style games like Championship Manager instead. Then there are the players that prefer everything in between. Isn't choice a wonderful thing?

So Premier League Stars is more of an arcade-style football game than a serious football connoisseurs' delight. EA have presented a gorgeous looking footballer, with all the trimmings you'd expect - a fantastic motion capture system, real players (and up to date too - Mark Bosnich keeps for Man U!), real FA kits, and of course authentic stadiums to play in. Controls are easy to use and get a hang of, and it's possible for arcade gamers out there to win games using only two control buttons (pass and shoot). With only the occasional questionable move made by the AI, FA Premier League Stars plays rather handsomely as an sports-action title.

Unfortunately, there's no way of changing the playable camera angle, so if you don't like the side-on perspective of the game, tough luck!

## Football stars

Premier League Stars' name sake is the new statistics system built into the game. Each team member has a collection of core statistics, and these



can be raised by trading in "stars" earned after winning a season match. Changes in statistics do noticeably affect player performance, so thankfully this new system doesn't seem at all like a tacked-on gimmick. The concept is quite intriguing, considering that you can choose to concentrate on quickly increasing the stats of single, star players or steadily increasing the overall skill of your team. To our dismay however, it becomes increasingly difficult to win any matches later in a season if you've managed to lose a few game, and thus a healthy number of stars to distribute.

## A tad excessive

Every year, we're guaranteed an updated version of <insert sport title here>, with of course the next year slapped on the end of the title. Better still, we're also pretty much certain that a

**"...no way of changing the playable camera angle..."**

## PLUS

[www.wypolice.gov.uk/wypolice/football/index.htm](http://www.wypolice.gov.uk/wypolice/football/index.htm)

A fascinating look into the world of policing football. Included on this site is the UK National Hooligan Hotline phone number, and a further reading list!



sports title will usually accompany every major sporting event. Case in point was the Soccer World Cup of last year. Not only did we have the World Cup version of FIFA, but we also had FIFA Road to World Cup! A separate title detailing the qualifying round of a sporting event! A bit excessive, don't you think?

Much the same can be said about FA Premier League Stars. Other than prettier graphics, official teams and players, you've got nothing innovative except for the star advancement system. And since that in itself is a bit of an Achilles Heel, you'd be better off waiting a few months to see what FIFA 2000 has to offer. Strictly for the fanatics. ■

March Stepnik

PCPP

**FOR:** A superbly playable multiplayer soccer title with gorgeous graphics.

**AGAINST:** Challenging season play thanks to the star system. Otherwise, it's nothing you haven't seen before.

71



# SKYDIVE!

● Genre: Sports Sim ● Players: 1 ● Developer: Gonzo ● Publisher: EA ● Distributor: EA ● Price: \$TBA ● Rating: G ● Available: Now  
 ● Need: P 200, 32 MB RAM, 65MB hard drive space. ● Want: PII 233! 64MB RAM, graphics accelerator. ● URL: <http://www.ea.com>

We have to ask. Have the developers actually jumped out of a plane before?

Have you ever wanted to hurl yourself out of an airplane thousands of feet above the ground? Ever wanted to feel the mad rush of air contorting the excess skin on your face into bizarre and disturbing positions? Ever wanted to dance around the air as you free-fall towards the ground below? Ever wanted to do all this and be completely contented that you will never hit the earth at full force, even without a parachute? Well, do Gonzo have the Sim for You!

## No fun

Unfortunately, that's about all this game has to offer. It's called Skydive, the (ahem) complete skydiving sim, and it lets you freefall, sky slalom and attempt an accurate landing, allocating points accordingly along the way. The aim of the game - to get the highest score. Skydive takes the danger, the risk and the adrenaline out of jumping out of a plane - it also takes out the fun.

In the Free Fall, points are allocated to the various moves you attempt to pull off in the sky, from cartwheel turns to aerial flips. The Sky Slalom challenges you to follow the course of hoops in the sky, each with a different point value, according to degree of difficulty. The last gives points as to how close to the bulls' eye you land. Of course, if you fail to open your chute at the right time, not only do you leave a hole in the ground, but you also lose all your points.

## A complete arse

The controls are a complete arse to get used to, especially in the slalom event. A combination of mouse and keyboard doesn't give you much control, you either pull to the right or left too much, or you roll out of control. Since gameplay consists entirely of maneuvering through a dive, you'd expect a more comprehensive range of moves at your disposal. Skydives! are surprisingly scant.

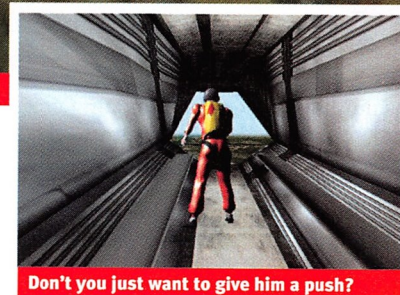


A thousand foot tall man. Standing on his head.

**"... and every time you jump you have to re-enter your name."**

The graphics are at the same stage that most flight sims were in the heyday of 94' - lots of flat 2D landscapes with only a few distinguishing features so you know where you are. What's the story? This is a sky diving sim! Other than tumbling around like a git during free fall, there's little else to do but admire the scenery. The visuals should have been a much higher priority.

The sound is nothing to write home about either. Interesting use of "Ride of the Valkyries", the same track made famous in Apocalypse Now, however. One of the game's few redeeming features.



Don't you just want to give him a push?

## Solitaire-friendly

Skydive! is basically an arcade game to be played when nothing else is available. There is no challenge, no real variety, to Skydive! Really, there isn't much to it at all. There's no tournament mode, no character stats, and every time you jump you have to re-enter your name. There's no customisation - with only one character, one parachute, one helmet and one outfit to choose from. The only choice you have is to jump, click and land. For a simulation where freedom is perhaps the most important aspect, there's very little freedom at all.

Agata Budinska

**PLUS**  
[www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml99/99065.html](http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml99/99065.html)  
 A truly bizarre and gripping piece on the dangers of wearing helmets in the playground. Sadly, no piccies of little uns running around with helmets on.

**PCPP**

**FOR:** The use of "Cry of the Valkyries", that's about it.

**AGAINST:** Where do we start? Please, play something else.

**12**

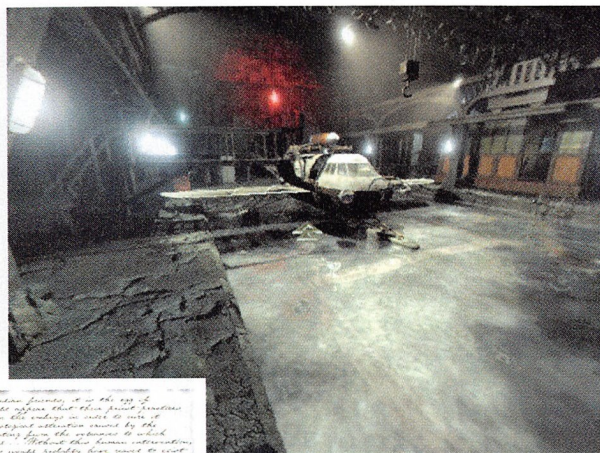


# AMERZONE

● Genre: Picturesque Puzzle Adventure ● Players: 1 ● Developer: Microids ● Publisher: Microids ● Distributor: Jack Of All Games ● Price: \$TBA ● Rating: G ● Available: Now ● Need: P166, 32MB RAM, Win 95/8, 4x CD ROM, 60 MB Hard Drive ● Want: P200, 64MB RAM ● URL: www.microids.com

No, seriously. This time the fate of the universe rests on the safe return of an egg.

Go on, try to pick up that silver sphere in the centre of the screen.

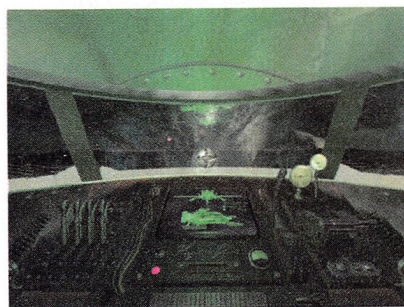


unobtrusive, it's almost not there. The ambience of Amerzone is very agreeable and in this regard the game works, especially as this can be a deterrent against boredom when the puzzles become too obscure.

Amerzone is a ponderous adventure owing much to Myst and its various successors. The standards of the genre include a whimsical, idyllic setting; an intriguing story about a deceased genius; tres chic art design and infuriating puzzles. Add to that list an ecological bent and you have the outline of Amerzone.

## The Mystical Egg

The story concerns a scientist who in his youth visited the untamed, uncultured country of Amerzone. There he sees all manner of creatures, plants and such, and happens to steal a giant egg from the natives. Hmmm, sounds like bad karma to me - and of course, Amerzone now is in terrible trouble... because of one egg. You are a journalist who comes to visit him. Anyways, he's just died and told you to take the egg back, so what are you waiting for? "The egg.. is still.. ALIVE!!"



## "The ambience of Amerzone is very agreeable..."

### Striking design

With very little on-screen action, games like Amerzone tread a tightrope - balancing in one-hand the conundrum of the ideal level of difficulty; in the other, how to maintain interest in the face of this difficulty. How do you make it fun, without being too challenging? The answer in this title lies in the almost perverse use of eye candy. Yep, this is one beautiful game. The 3D free moving perspective also makes it all look rather interesting, although you might feel like you're looking through a peep-hole at times.

Much effort has gone into the design element. The detailed and varied interiors, the gothic mood (that's Wuthering Heights, not Marilyn Manson, mmmkay?) and the hand drawn artwork are all fairly breathtaking. The music is so



A light relief from pre-rendered hell.



### Endless roaming

Flash visuals are one thing but it's the gameplay that counts, right? And this is where you run into trouble. Fact is, these games just aren't for everyone. A gamer need only see Myst or Timelapse (well, maybe not Timelapse...) for a minute or two and they'll either love the thing or despise it. As far as this goes, Amerzone is fairly representative of its ancestors - more of the same. Reading long journals repeatedly for that one clue you need to solve a puzzle, endless roaming and repetitive actions in trying to get something to work. They're here in all their glory.

### Perplexing

Having said that, it's not a bad game at all. The only real problem with this game is it doesn't break any ground, nor does it go any distance to inspire the player. Amerzone is a solid enough title, if also an acquired taste. If perplexing adventure games are your thing, then Amerzone is heartily recommended. If not, think carefully...

John Dewhurst

PCPP

**FOR:** Strong, effective artwork and design elements. Nice atmosphere. The latest in a tried and true genre.

**AGAINST:** Same old, same old. Can become tedious by its very nature. As a result, limited appeal.

68



# FLY!

● Genre: Flight Sim ● Players: 1-8 ● Developer: Terminal Reality  
 ● Publisher: GOD/Take2 ● Distributor: Jack Of All Games ● Price: \$TBA ● Rating: G  
 ● Available: Now ● Need: P200, 32MB RAM, 400MB HD, 3D graphics card  
 ● Want: PII 333, 64MB RAM, 1.6 GB HD ● URL: www.flytyri.com

Gratuitous exclamation marks, eh? We love 'em!

Fly! has the marketing subtitle "The Ultimate Flight Simulator For Beginners to Experts". Quite a bold statement given the extreme range dividing these two levels of ability. This is where I'd have to make a basic assumption and suppose that this game has been developed with the expert more in mind than the beginner, as the learning curve requires quite a lot of patience and time. The attention to detail is reflected in the length of the manual, all 288 pages of it. This game is no "fly on-the-fly" experience, if you will excuse the pun.

## Fly me to the moon

What the developers have achieved here is a heightened degree of physical

aerodynamic realism, right down to the manual adjustment of fuel mixtures and the monitoring of oil pressure. This detail spans across the whole experience, from designing your flight in the Flight Planner to the very detailed take-off simulation, in-flight navigation with GPS and terrain mapping, to the landing sequence and runway taxing. All of this is very well complemented by the excellent inclusion of realistic radio signal from air traffic control and very convincing engine sound effects. When it comes to absorbing experience, Fly! is certainly not the kind of game you want to take your eyes (or ears) off for very long.

## Supa-dupa fly

The developers have done an excellent job of accurately recreating the consoles of the five available aircraft (Cessna 172R, the Piper Malibu Mirage, the Piper Navajo Chieftain, the Beechcraft King Air B200, and the Raytheon Hawker 800XP jet). The detail goes right down to every little dial and switch with all of these representing functionality. It's the kind of game where once you have established an acceptable horizontal stability, you can spend a lot of time flicking switches, pressing buttons, and consulting the manual to avoid the proverbial red button. Outside of the aircraft you'll find that more detail has been put into the sky effects over those on the ground. Travelling through cloud clusters is quite a lot more enjoyable than seeing how close you can take the aircraft to the ground without stacking it. And on this subject, it's unfortunate that Fly! includes no crash capabilities - hitting the ground at 120 knots is more like watching gymnastics on a soft mat with crash sound overdubs. The aircraft just



Let's! Use! Exclamation! Marks! After! Every! Word! Damn irritating, isn't it?



**"...it's unfortunate that Fly! includes no crash capabilities..."**

won't come apart, and will even take off again after a nasty nose plant into the side of a hill.

## Pretty fly for a... sorry

Fly! is quite a good game for a lazy Sunday afternoon. If you have the patience and want an accurate flight simulator that doesn't skimp on the important details, then Fly! is certainly worth a look. In the process, I've painted this game as one more for experienced virtual pilots, but it does include a quick start mode for beginners to enjoy the scenery, as well as a few step-by-step sequences for engine start-up, take-off and landing. So with these features and its scalability, Fly! is a very well balanced game overall, and I'd recommend it to all the flight sims fans out there who want to add another quality simulator to their virtual hangar. ■

Ben Fallowen



## PLUS

WEBSITES ON THE PLANES YOU CAN FLY IN FLY!

Piper Malibu Mirage - [www.newpiper.com/aircraft/mirage\\_main.htm](http://www.newpiper.com/aircraft/mirage_main.htm)  
 Beechcraft King Air B200 - [www.internetairplanes.com/files/38a.html](http://www.internetairplanes.com/files/38a.html)  
 Cessna 172R Skyhawk - [www.cessna.texttron.com/skyhawksp/](http://www.cessna.texttron.com/skyhawksp/)  
 Piper Navajo Chieftain - [www.shorelineaviation.com/chieftain.html](http://www.shorelineaviation.com/chieftain.html)  
 Raytheon Hawker 800XP - [www.raytheon.com/rac/800xp/hwk800.htm](http://www.raytheon.com/rac/800xp/hwk800.htm)



PCPP

**FOR:** Overall, pretty nice graphics and game flexibility. Heaps of detail, complex real-life conditions, avionics, GPS, Air Traffic Control, plus visits to major international airports.

**AGAINST:** Maximum install at 1.6 GB. No satisfaction for those people who decide they want to see their Cessna break apart on a hillside - no crash simulation.

85



# THIEF

## THE DARK PROJECT

Classy, enigmatic, subversive - and that's just the main character! Thief is an essential gaming experience.

### PLUS

**DROMED - CREATION AND THIEF**

[www.thief.darkproject.com/teg/index.html](http://www.thief.darkproject.com/teg/index.html)

A good six months after the release of Thief, Looking Glass released Dromed, the official Thief: The Dark Project level editor. The download is free. In true Thief spirit, the Dromed level editor is a perplexing piece of programming. So difficult that it even a well documented tutorial doesn't help much make sense of the thing. Still, that hasn't stopped a portion of the Thief community creating some a collection of fantastic missions for the rest to enjoy. Go here to download these - the list grows weekly!



*"The world is a great scale, which must stay in balance, in the face of forces seeking to skew its arms. A collection of knowledge is a set of weights, to be added to one side of the scale or the other, as necessary. Our task is to place the weights, slowly, carefully, over centuries, in order that the balance be preserved."*

-excerpt from the lectures of the Keeper Loremaster.

### Sneak, don't run.

Are Looking Glass Studios perhaps the "Keepers" of the gaming industry?

With their first person shooter/sneaker, Thief: The Dark Project, then indeed it seems they must be. The world's first "Thief sim", Thief had the player skulking through dimly lit buildings as Garrett, expert cat-burglar, trying their hand at successfully alleviating the most prized possessions from some progressively challenging locations. Sounds

straightforward, eh? Not at all. Thief has been called, often to its own detriment, as one of the most challenging first person action games yet. And one of the most captivating.

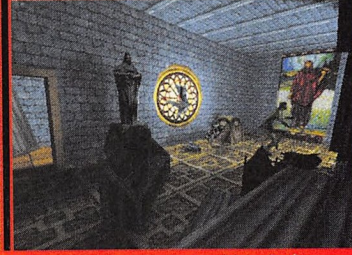
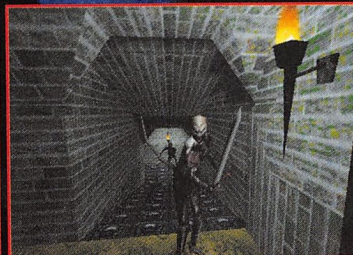
### First person action

Thief's a first person shooter with plenty of notoriety, and that's because it offers a refreshingly new gaming experience in a well-established genre. Although there has been a noticeable change in the focus and direction of first person shooters over the last twelve months or so, their development, both in new concepts and presentation, has been slight and cautious. That's not to diminish the acclaim of titles such as Unreal, Sin and Half-Life - these each deserve recognition for what they have attempted, succeeded and/or failed to do. Unreal used its powerful graphics engine to immerse the player. Sin

added multiple objectives and a pseudo-realistic damage system to the fray. And Half-Life - well, it proved that a first person shooter could become something else entirely with strong narrative and greater character AI. However, underneath all the shine and glitter, these title remained true to their action roots - as fast paced blast-fests.

Thief: The Dark Project is also a first person action game. However, Thief as a gaming experience sits at the other end of the first person action scale. Where other first person titles require speed, a super-human sense of invincibility and little regard for any sense of realism to enjoy, Thief requires patience, cunning, and much forethought. Thief rewards caution, and punishes, most often fatally, carelessness. Try playing Thief like your typical first person shooter, and imminent death is almost certain.

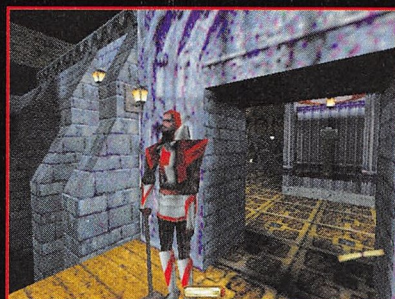
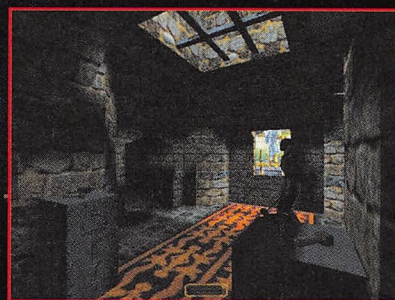
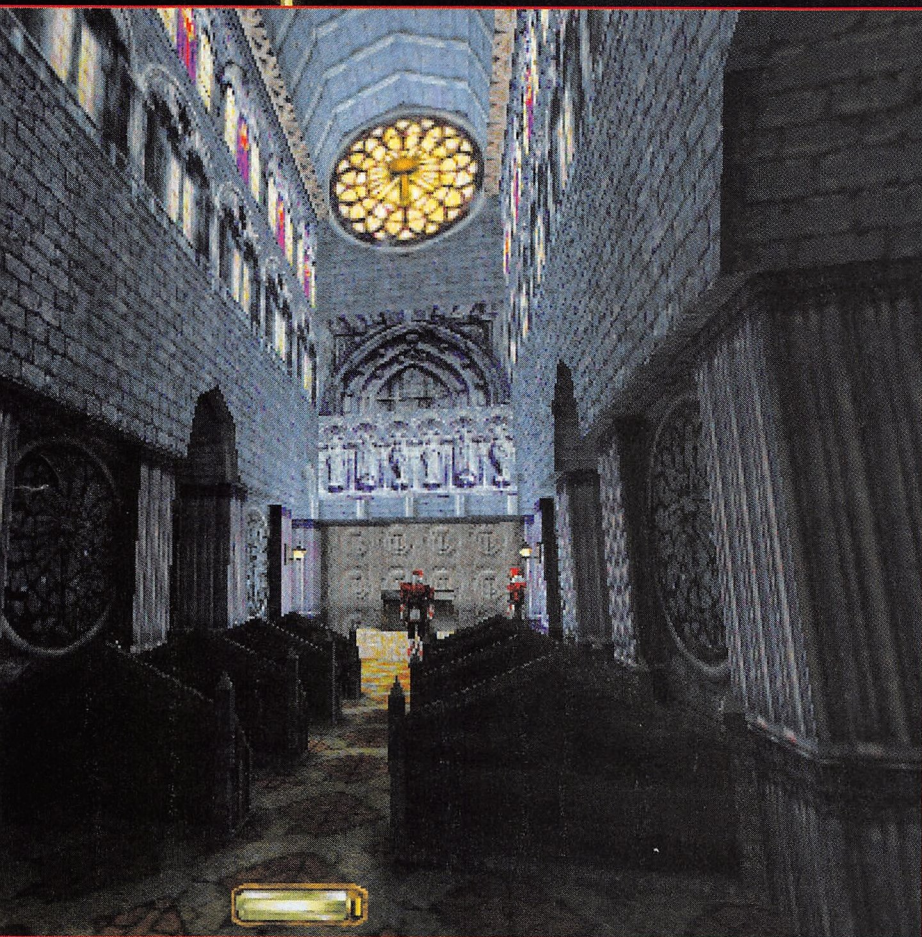
Where other action titles require the



The "Insect guy". Further evidence of psychedelic fungus abuse - a typical trait of all RPG developers (Looking Glass also brought us the Ultima Underworld series).



[www.thief-darkproject.com/](http://www.thief-darkproject.com/)  
**DARKPROJECT.COM**  
 Thief: The Dark Project has sparked much discussion, analysis, and debate. Can an action game where subterfuge is your most powerful weapon succeed in the age of rocket-jumping madness? Is it really fun to play, or are a large bunch of gamers really kidding themselves that Thief is a truly innovative title? These are just some of the topics discussed at this fantastic fan site. Even if you're not interested in joining the forum, this page is still an exceptional source of Thief (and Thief 2) news! as well as anything Thief and Looking Glass related. The definitive Thief: The Dark Project web page.



Undercover - yet another brilliant Thief level.

## "Most impressive though, is the way Thief conveys a sense of mortality in the game."

slaughter of hundreds (if not thousands) of living things, Thief gives the player a collection of lethal weapons, yet encourages that not a single life be taken during the mission. How's that for twisted? And where others create tension by putting you up

against a multitude of enemies, Thief places you against no more than a handful of opponents at a time. Yet you spend the majority of your time scared out of your mind - especially when all it takes is a simple scuffling of your boots to alert the guards of your presence.

Most impressive though, is the way Thief conveys a sense of mortality in the game. Death comes easy in Thief. It can take but two swings of a Hammerite's hammer and you'll be knocked down. Fall from a great height, and you will injure yourself. Rather than being a frustrating balance issue, your mortality is the driving force behind finding the most economical and inconspicuous path to your mission objectives. Honing your skills is rewarded with deep satisfaction that only a true artist can understand.

Combine all of the above elements together and whack a wonderfully captivating story around it and you've

got one of the most immersive and challenging first person experiences on offer. The only other game to come close to Thief experience for me since its release is System Shock 2 (reviewed, p 64). The interesting thing is that System Shock 2 uses the Dark Engine (modified), and was developed in conjunction with Looking Glass Studios. This goes to show that Looking Glass' genius is not a one-off fluke (their pedigree is damn impressive - creating also Ultima Underworld 1&2, System Shock and Terra Nova). Any game that you are still playing fervently over a year down the track deserves attention. And for me, one such title is Thief: The Dark Project. Essential gaming. ■

March Stepnik

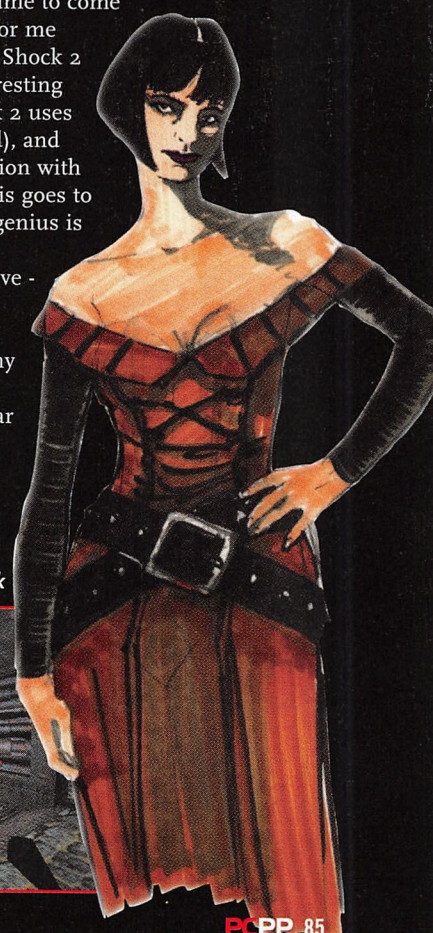
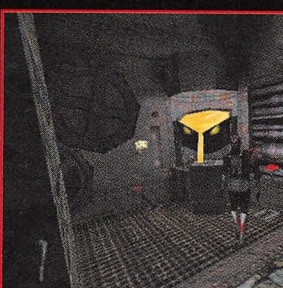
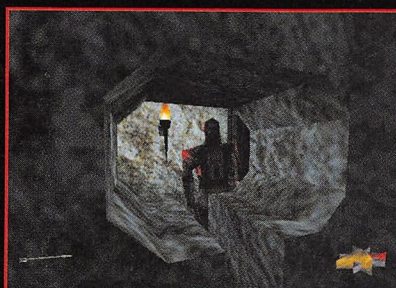
### REVIEWED: Issue 33

SCORED: 95%

**WHAT WE SAID THEN:** "Mostly though, you'll be relying upon your wits and ingenuity to survive. Listening for footsteps and other telltale noises is crucial, as the sound effects and music exhibit the same kind of shocking originality on display elsewhere in the game."

"Thief is a brave step forwards for game design. Ambition shouldn't be applauded on its own, but when it's coupled with such a fantastic game then we should give it a standing ovation."

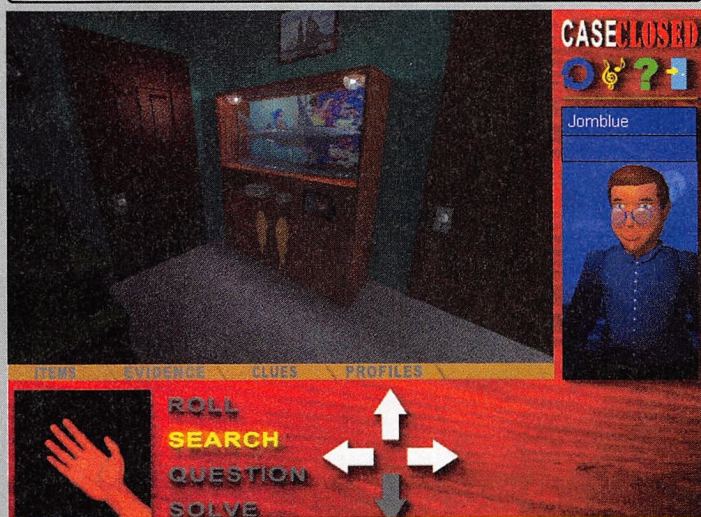
### THIEF: The Dark Project





# CASE CLOSED

● Genre: Board Game conversion ● Publisher: Spectrum Pacific



➡ Board game conversions on the P.C. are a tricky business. Do you rely on the quality of the original game to sustain interest? Do you add lots of little features to spice it up? Case Closed is the desktop re-invention of Cluedo. A local production, it treads the fine line between maintaining the feel of the board game but adding an ongoing story, as well as a more involved style of investigation.

A fine line indeed, since the pace of the game becomes more of a canter than a gallop. Board games in my opinion need to be fairly quick paced to maintain interest. Monopoly is about as slow as it really gets. If you like your games paced like Risk, then this one may be for you. The pace is slow because you need to actually search all the individual rooms for clues, weapons and evidence. This is done in rather amateurish looking 3D sequences. Together with profiles of all the suspects,

you need to deduce who was where, with what, doing naughtiness to the much maligned host (or ghost, hah!) of the evening.

It's a pity that the modern gamer has been weaned on 3D accelerated, manicured games because when you see a game like this, which is quite below the standard, you might be turned off without giving it a sporting chance. It's really not a bad little game - don't judge a book by its cover!

Having said that, it won't be to the taste of all. The ongoing story is rather irrelevant and many of the additions don't expand the basic experience of Cluedo. Some might say that board game conversions are a little pointless anyway. Why, if you can't have a domestic with your closest loved ones over Park Lane or dodgy dice rolling, is there any hope for the family lifestyle? ■

John Dewhurst



The PCPP tattoo: have you got yours yet?

# TEMPTU TEMPORARY TATTOO STUDIO

● Genre: Tattoo Creativity ● Developer: Macromedia ● Distributor: Macmillan

➡ There seems to be a bit of a trend going on these days with various forms of body art, things like body piercing, tattoo's and branding's. Enigma from the Jim Rose Circus being a perfect example of going all the way, covering himself with a jigsaw tattoo and coral grafting to his skull to grow horns. Yes, it looks very cool and bizarre, and you may have even said to yourself, 'Wow, I'd love to do something like that, a lot smaller maybe, but...'. These butts have traditionally include the following:

- 1) But my mum would kill me,
- 2) But my boss will fire me,
- 3) But my wife might leave me.

Of course, going for the temporary stuff is a total cop-out.

The Temptu Temporary Tattoo Studio helps your creative juices flow, and as the logo says "Fun But Not Forever". All you need to get started is an inkjet printer, included in the box you'll find sticker paper and an iron-on transfer for putting your design on your favourite clothes. They have also included 24 ready to wear

designs. The format is easy to use for everyone, with many basic designs to build on. Everything from lettering, angel wings, roses and banners; Celtic, tribal and traditional are included in the program. Choose colouring and placement of your design on your favourite shirt, belly or letterhead.

Unfortunately, within the program you can only work with these basic designs, as there is no import feature. The layout area is also a down point, a square, that cannot be enlarged or stretched. Another disappointment is the fact you can't print your own temporary body tattoo's. Although sticker paper and iron-on transfer material is supplied, it seems creating a temporary tat is just impossible from the humble ink jet printer and standard paper. Fortunately Temptu remembered to include a form so you can send away to the states to have your original design made up for use on the body. So go ahead, get that "PC PowerPlay Forever" tat you've always wanted without the girlfriend (or boyfriend) finding out. ■

Agata Budinska





# TONKA GARAGE

● Genre: Tonka Truck Creation Sim  
● Developer: Hasbro Interactive  
● Publisher: Hasbro



When you were much younger, did you ever dream of Tonka trucks? Did you look at your big yellow monster truck and say "You know, this would be so much better if it had a rear spoiler, and damn that yellow has GOT to go"? Maybe you already have a lucrative career designing Tonka Trucks, or other toys for that matter, but for the rest of us, we're going to have to settle for Tonka Garage.

In Tonka Garage, Tonka Joe and his gang are back to help you design your perfect Tonka truck, complete with bull bars and loading trays, to be spray painted any colour you like. First you have to get a car from the junkyard, compress it, melt it and pour it into the mould, just like they do in a real junkyard. You then get to put your truck together, choosing wheels, motor, front mid and back. Send it in to be painted, then gas that baby up! Tonka Joe even has a few unfinished jobs for you that once completed earn you Cool Tools and bonus parts to build with.

Anything that you create can be loaded in for racing in Tonka Raceway (see right), where you can see just what your truck is made of.

It's a very simple format, with a talk through guide from Tonka Joe and his pals, so you need never get lost. It's not exactly hours of endless fun, but it is the perfect accompaniment to Tonka Raceway. ■

Agata Budinska



# TONKA RACEWAY

● Genre: Kiddy Racing ● Developer: Hasbro Interactive ● Publisher: Hasbro



Judging by the way Tonka Joe is staring at his companion, he's not just interested in racing quick trucks.

Many things come to mind when you think Tonka, such as small children wetting the sandbox. Mainly though, you think Trucks. Big Trucks. Big Yellow Trucks. With a huge loading tray on the back, to carry sand from one end of the box to the other. You also think of Truck races, of falling onto the truck when you trip, and calling for a re-match. Ah, yes, those were the days.

Tonka are now bringing the magic to the humble PC, with Tonka Raceway. Tonka Joe and his friends, Suzie, Janet and the gang are there to guide you through the tracks, help you upgrade your truck, design your own track and watch it all again in the replay. Everything is laid out nice and simple for even the youngest trucker amongst us.

The setup is a little primitive, with the camera angle looking straight down from above the track so that you can't see what lies ahead.

The direction keys are used to drive with no need to change gears. Each time you win a race, or even just finish one you earn a credit towards an upgrade. Upgrades include fuel injectors, motors and tyres to help you haul arse even faster around the track. There are also a whole stack of obstacles to get in your way,

including snowmen on the ice tracks and trees on the jungle tracks.

They've also included for the kids a press room which lets you print out various certificates of achievement. Not exactly cutting edge, but definitely one for fans and the younger ones. ■

Agata Budinska





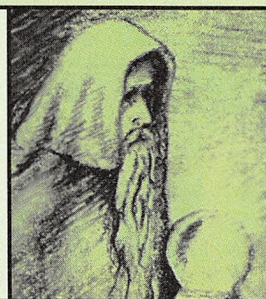
# GAMEPLAY

**HEADLINES:** EverQuest beginner's guide • Driving Game Special: Re-Volt and TOCA 2 tips • Huge list of Kingpin cheats

## THE ORACLE

His brow furrowed to resemble a contour map, the Oracle gazes into his crystal ball in deep concentration...

The Oracle is a Wisdom Dispensing Service. He cannot abide cheaters. Write to him at:  
**Oracle**  
 PC PowerPlay  
 78 Renwick st  
 Redfern, NSW 2016  
[oracle@pcpowerplay.next.com.au](mailto:oracle@pcpowerplay.next.com.au)



## CODE

### F-22 Lightning 3

A true battle-hardened pilot would most definitely not approve, but if you're feeling weak and spineless then hit **Ctrl-Enter** and any of the following codes. Just prepare to be branded a deserter.  
**black oil** - refuel  
**fight the future** - replenish ammo  
**ghostpit** - invisible plane  
**i want to believe** - no crashes  
**the truth is out there** - unlimited ammo  
**this isnt happening** - repair damage  
**trust no one** - god mode

### Dungeon Keeper 2

As only hideously ugly, low-life scum use cheats, you'd feel right home playing this game. Press **Ctrl-Alt-C** then type the code. A noise will sound to inform you the cheat has worked.  
**SHOW ME THE MONEY** - extra money  
**NOW THE RAIN HAS GONE** - reveals map  
**FEEL THE POWER** - upgrades all monsters' skills to level 10  
**FIT THE BEST** - get all rooms and traps  
**I BELIEVE ITS MAGIC** - get all Magic Spells  
**DO NOT FEAR THE REAPER** - finish level

### Earthworm Jim

**Q** I was wondering how you kill the Queen in Buttville at the end of Earthworm Jim. Please help.

#### Rick & Mary Dalmau

**A** Judging from the brevity of your request, I suspect you have no time to waste. Thus, I shall proceed with haste! Assuming you have arrived at the continue point on the Queen's butt, edge your way down - making small jumps and whipping creatures when required - until you are underneath her butt. Now begin firing at the butt above you, leaping back to the right-hand side of the screen when necessary, avoiding the spikes as they appear, and eventually the butt will fall. To defeat the Queen proper, collect the plasma blasters that should materialise near where you came in to equip yourself

with sufficient ammunition. Shooting the queen is a little tricky: move anti-clockwise, firing off rapid volleys at intervals - this should prevent her from summoning any assistance. Keep it up and you will prevail, my fearless friends.

### Fallout 2

**Q** In Fallout 2 my car is 'outta power'. Where can I re-powerise it?

#### Brendan Markey Email

**A** In the future, it seems cars no longer run on petrol as they do today. Thus, I can understand your confusion, Brendan. What you require instead is some kind of energy cell, of the Micro Fusion Cell or Small Energy Cell variety; and, just personally, I'd recommend the greater convenience of the former. To refuel, simply click on the car, select your

## tips&tactics

### Re-Volt

- When you first start playing, don't race in any class other than Junior RC. This is an incredibly hard game on the higher difficulty levels, so it's advised to begin at the lowest. Not only is the speed manageable, but the cars don't spin out anything like as much.
- To collect all the stars in Practice mode, you'll have to up the difficulty to Console. Several of the stars on later tracks require the extra speed that this gives you.
- Col Moss is the car of choice for the early cups, but once you unlock Adeon use him without hesitation. Adeon's handling is second to none and he's not entirely ill-equipped for straight line speed either.
- The rear-view mirror is extremely handy for when you want to drop oil slicks, ball bearings or fake powerups in the path of your opponents. It also looks really cool when you're driving Panga and can see his snarling face in close-up!

### Early office favourites Dynamo San and Candy Pebbles



inventory, then cycle through to the cell you wish to use and click on it.

### Fallout 2

**Q** I'm having trouble in Fallout 2, which is the second best game I've ever played (other than Baldur's Gate). My problem is I can't fix the power plant at Gecko. This means I can't become a citizen of Vault City and I can't enter the Vault. I think I have to get a hydromagnetiser-thingy,

but I can't find it. Any help would be great.

Also could you please tell me all the extra traits you can get in the game? So far I am an expert shit scooper, a gigolo, a prizefighter, a champion and married.

#### Brad Hunt Email

**A** Oh, you mean you don't know where to find a Hydroelectric Magnetosphere Regulator? How absurd! It's so

You've gotta love a game where you can become a Porn star.





## tips&tactics

### TOCA 2

Only 2 cars matter in TOCA2 - 3 if you're a compete beginner:

**Renault Laguna** - Fastest car in the hands of a skilled driver, the Renault is a twitchy, super-responsive racecar that demands 100%, 100% of the time. Also the best with the game's default setup.

**The Nissan Primera** - Much like the Lotus in Grand Prix Legends, the Datsun is the choice tool for average drivers who need mechanical compensation.

Comfortable and smooth to drive, the Datsun's all-round performance can give the Renault a good run when driven by a top-notch driver.

**Vauxhall Vectra** - Easily the sweetest handling of all TOCA2's cars. Is most excellent for beginners, but simply can't compete against the Datsun or Renault.

#### Quick Starts

It takes exactly 3 seconds for the ready "Red" light to go to green "Go". Keep the revs steady at halfway, count the 3 seconds, and, on "3", just as the lights go green, feed it power quickly, but being careful not to floor it in one go. Be careful not to have it at max revs when the light goes green, or you'll just sit there spinning rubber.

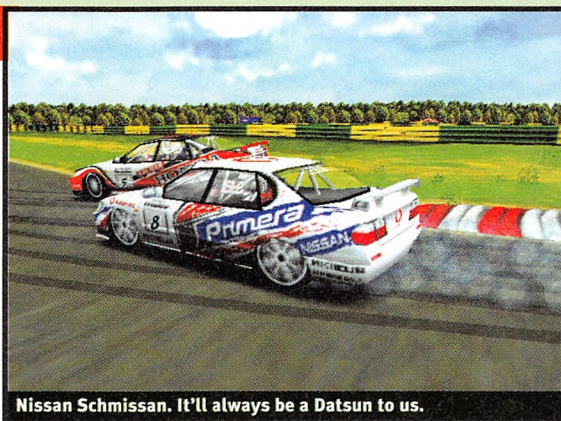
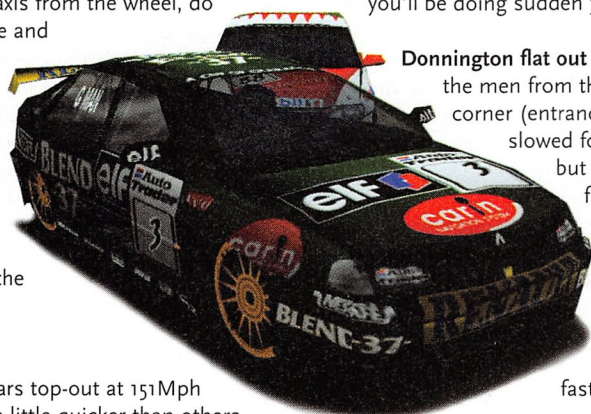
#### Controller setup

Play with a quality wheel. It's the only way to racing righteousness. If your wheel allows you to have the pedals on a separate axis from the wheel, do so. Being able to brake and accelerate

simultaneously gives a significant advantage, as you can slow the car for a corner whilst keeping the revs high, catapulting it through the exit as you lift off the brake pedal.

#### Setups

All standard TOCA2 cars top-out at 151Mph - some just get there a little quicker than others.



Nissan Schmissan. It'll always be a Datsun to us.

#### Essential:

Increase the 6th gear ratio to maximum, put 5th up two notches, 4th, 3rd and 2nd up one notch. Keep this setting for all tracks.

#### Optional:

- Move the brake bias forward a notch or two for more responsive turn-in.
- Wing setting can be brought right back to minimum downforce with little effect of cornering. Keep sliding it back until you can only just take the fastest corners.

#### Misc

**Brands bump** - The secret to not coming off at the bottom of the rollercoaster dip in turn 1 at Brands Hatch is simply to take it while squeezing the power on. Run the dip off the gas, or with a steady throttle and you'll be doing sudden 360's.

**Donnington flat out** - This is the track that separates the men from the boys. Only the very last corner (entrance to the straight) needs to be slowed for. Turn 1 should be taken in 5th, but every other corner can be taken flat out, which most racers don't realise because it looks impossible and is damn scary.

**Slow in, fast out.** - As with all proper racing sims, "slow in and fast out" is the ticket to fast lap times and regular wins.

straightforward I cannot begin to imagine where you went wrong. After talking to Harold, did you pocket the Coolant Report and Part Requisition Form from his desk? Have you in your possession a talisman given to you by a Mole Rat and a holodisk from Gordon, both of whom are to be found in Gecko? Once in Vault City, did you show the holodisk to Councillor McClure? Finally, have you returned to Gecko and programmed the maintenance bot to repair and restart the power plant? Ah, I thought as much.

To your other question, there are several karmic traits you can pick up -

Gravedigger, Porn Star, Child Killer and Berserker, in addition to the ones you already have - but I'll leave you to work out how to get them. Otherwise, you learn the Gecko Skinning special perk when you rescue Smiley early on in the game.

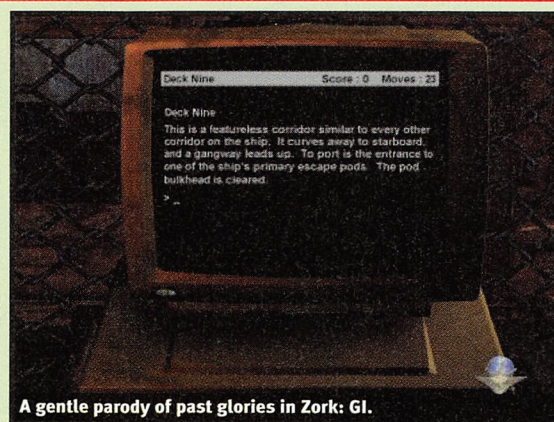
#### Zork Grand Inquisitor

**Q** What do I do after I have broken out of the prison cell? What code do I enter into that computer station thingy? Please help me!

**Leo Collins**

**Email**

**A** Well, I know that friendship and the repayment of favours are such unfashionable



A gentle parody of past glories in Zork: GI.

concepts these days, but it would occur to me to try to get Jack out of prison. After all, he did help you to escape. At the computer panel (your marvellously evocative "computer station thingy",

that is), use the blueprints and security camera monitor to figure out in which cell Jack is being held. That's the code you need to enter into the panel. Good luck, you're very near the end!

## CODE

### Kingpin

Activating the Kingpin cheats is a little complex. But then the path of righteousness is even tougher, you yellow-bellied nancy boy.

• Open the "Main" folder where you installed the game.

• Open the autoexec.cfg file in Notepad.

• Type the line "set developer 1" and save.

• Now, when you load Kingpin, press ~ (tilde) to trigger the cheat mode.

Type the codes below:

**IMMORTAL** - God mode

**NOCLIP** - No Clipping

**GIVE WEAPONS** - all weapons

**GIVE ALL** - all items, except cash

**GIVE AMMO** - full ammo

**GIVE HEALTH** - full health

**GIVE ARMOR** - full armour

**GIVE xxxx BULLETS** -

gives xxxx number of bullets

**GIVE xxxx SHELLS** - gives

xxxx number of shells

**GIVE xxxx GAS** - gives

xxxx number of gas

**GIVE xxxx CASH** - gives

xxxx number of cash

**GIVE xxxx 308CAL** - gives

xxxx number of .308

calibre bullets

**GIVE xxxx GRENADES** -

gives xxxx number of

grenades

**GIVE xxxx ROCKETS** -

gives xxxx number of

rockets

**GIVE CROWBAR** - crowbar

**GIVE PISTOL** - pistol

**GIVE SHOTGUN** -

shotgun

**GIVE FLAMETHROWER**

- flamethrower

**GIVE TOMMYGUN** -

tommy gun

**GIVE HEAVY**

**MACHINEGUN** - heavy

machine gun

**GIVE GRENADE**

**LAUNCHER** - grenade

launcher

**GIVE BAZOOKA** - bazooka

**GIVE SPISTOL** - silencer

for handgun

**GIVE PISTOL RELOAD** -

auto-reloading handgun

**GIVE HEALTH** - health

**GIVE COIL** - coil

**GIVE WATCH** - watch

**GIVE BATTERY** - battery

**GIVE WHISKEY** - whiskey

**GIVE CHEM\_PLANT\_KEY**



# CODE

- chemical plant key  
**GIVE FUSE** - fuse  
**GIVE SHOP\_KEY** - bait shop key  
**GIVE WAREHOUSE\_KEY** - warehouse key  
**GIVE LIZZY HEAD** - Lizzy's head  
**GIVE SHIPYARD\_KEY** - shipyard key  
**GIVE OFFICE\_KEY** - Moker's office key  
**GIVE VALVE** - valve handle  
**GIVE TICKET** - skytram ticket  
**GIVE FLASHLIGHT** - flashlight  
**GIVE SMALL HEALTH** - small medical kit  
**GIVE LARGE HEALTH** - large medical kit  
**GIVE ADRENALINE** - adrenaline  
**GIVE HELMET ARMOR** - helmet armour  
**GIVE JACKET ARMOR** - jacket armour  
**GIVE LEGS ARMOR** - legs armour  
 Game levels and cutscenes:  
**MAP BAR\_PV**  
**MAP BAR\_RC**  
**MAP BAR\_SR**  
**MAP BAR\_ST**  
**MAP BAR\_SY**  
**MAP BIKE**  
**MAP KPCUT1**  
**MAP KPCUT3**  
**MAP KPCUT4**  
**MAP KPCUT7**  
**MAP PAWN\_PV**  
**MAP PAWN\_RC**  
**MAP PAWN\_SR**  
**MAP PAWN\_SR2**  
**MAP PAWN\_ST**  
**MAP PAWN\_SY**  
**MAP PV\_1**  
**MAP PV\_B**  
**MAP PV\_BOSS**  
**MAP PV\_L**  
**MAP RC1**  
**MAP RC2**  
**MAP RC3**  
**MAP RC4**  
**MAP RC5**  
**MAP RCBOS1**  
**MAP RCBOS2**  
**MAP SEWER**  
**MAP SR1**  
**MAP SR2**  
**MAP SR3**  
**MAP SR4**  
**MAP STEEL1**  
**MAP STEEL2**  
**MAP STEEL3**  
**MAP STEEL4**  
**MAP SY\_L**  
**MAP SY1**  
**MAP SY2**  
**MAP TY1**  
**MAP TY2**  
**MAP TY3**  
**MAP TY4**

## Final Fantasy VII

**Q** I'm stuck at the part where the bad guys try to blow up the pillar that holds the roof over sector 7. How the hell do you beat a boss that just freezes you so that you can't do anything - and then when all of your guys are frozen, it's game over. That pisses me off.

**Michael "Evil" Tarascio**  
**Email**

**A** Indeed, it would piss me off as well, "Evil". Perhaps, though, you have been blinded to the solution of your dilemma by thinking that your party is being frozen. In fact, the boss is using a Pyramid attack and merely encasing your hapless characters. To free your companions, just attack them - don't worry, this won't hurt. If you need further help, try a few freezing spells of your own. The irony here, no doubt, be lost on your enemy, however.

## Grim Fandango

**Q** I am buggered if I know what to do in Grim Fandango. I have just rescued Meche from the secret compartment in the vault and am now on the beach with Glottis, Meche and the two skeleton kids. How do I make it to year four?

**Chris Grady**  
**Email**

**A** After consulting with my esteemed colleague, John "Lucas Lovechild" Dewhurst, I am able to impart the following advice. If you're on the beach with Meche, Glottis and the SS La Mancha, then the only thing left that you have to do is

modify  
 your  
 ship



so that it can get through the coral reef. Go back to the crane. Get in and lower the crane where it stands, into the big gnashing cylinders (i.e. near the extreme right side of the island). It will get stuck. Now raise the crane and the cylinders will fly out and Glottis can go about putting them on the La Mancha. Thereby enabling your speedy escape from Domino but not before a showdown!

## Full Throttle

**Q** Pleeeeease HELP! I am stuck on Full Throttle! In Tods Junk Yard I can't get the freaking dog to move so I can get the motorbike parts. What do I do?

**Cameron Hain**  
**Wheeler's Hill, VIC**

**A** What do you do? Quit shouting, for a start. I may be as old as the universe, but my hearing remains in prime condition, thank you. The simple answer to your question is to lure the dog away from his station. You have some meat in your oversized pockets, so why not place it somewhere in the vicinity - like the blue car, perhaps. Hmm, but it appears that's not quite enough. What if the car was actually hanging in mid-air? Throughout all my canine experience, I've never seen a dog fly, so I think you'll now be safe to get what you need.

## Ultima 8: Pagan

**Q** While your mag has been going on about Ultima Online, I've been playing Ultima 8. Being an eleven year-old, I have read the manual but it won't show how to cast those darn spells. I'm on my last legs. Can you help me out?

**Dennis**  
**Lost Address**

**A** There are four disciplines of magic that you can master and use in Ultima 8: Pagan - Necromancy, Theurgy, Thaumaturgy and Sorcery. **Necromancy**  
 To create a Necromantic spell:  
 • Place the appropriate



Take some magic lessons with Ultima VIII: Pagan.

reagents into a pouch,

- close the pouch,
  - inally, use the Key of the Caretaker.
- You will now have a talisman, or "chit", containing the spell in your pack. To cast the spell, simply double mouse-click the appropriate chit. Mana is consumed when casting the spell, not creating it.

## Theurgy

To create a Theurgistic spell:

- Collect the silver ore chunks from the caves beneath Argentrock Isle.
- Take the ore to Korick the Smith so he can forge the tokens (the spell's focus).
- Place the tokens, one at a time, on the Altar of Focus on Argentrock Isle. The tokens will now be charged with Theurgistic spells. Mana will be consumed each time you cast (double mouse-click) a spell (focus).

## Thaumaturgy

To create a Thaumaturgic spell:

- Place the spellbook into a pouch.
  - Put the reagents in the pouch.
  - Use (double mouse-click) the book.
- To cast the spell, simply read the charged spellbook.

## Sorcery

The most complicated of the magicks in Pagan, and the discipline causing the most frustration. Initially, the Sorcerers demanded that each of the reagents and candles be placed in a precise location (usually a mere pixel made the difference between success and failure) on the pentagram lest the casting fail. After the U8 patch (which is included on this month's CD PowerPlay), the casting of Sorcerous spells is much easier. To create a Sorcerous spell:  
 • Place the focus at the centre of the pentagram.  
 • Place the candles, of appropriate colour and in the correct order, at the five vertices of the pentagram. Light these.  
 • Place the necessary reagents also at the points of the pentagram, as close to the candles as possible. In some cases, the reagents can be placed on top of the candles.  
 • Stand outside of the pentagram, and double mouse-click in the centre of it. If successful, the reagents will have disappeared and the focus will be pulsing. Casting a the spell requires a double mouse-click of the appropriate focus.



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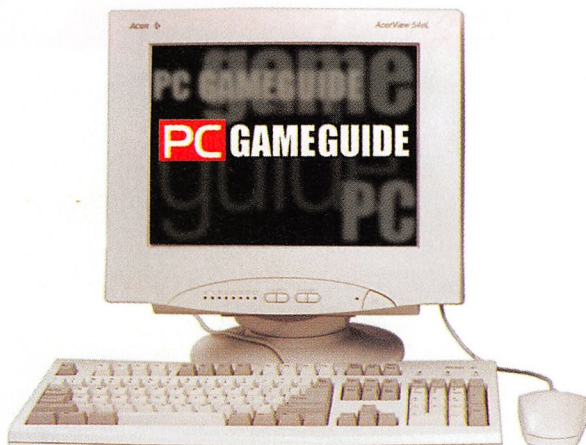
where all the weird

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# Everquest

## beginner's guide

by Murray Philbrick



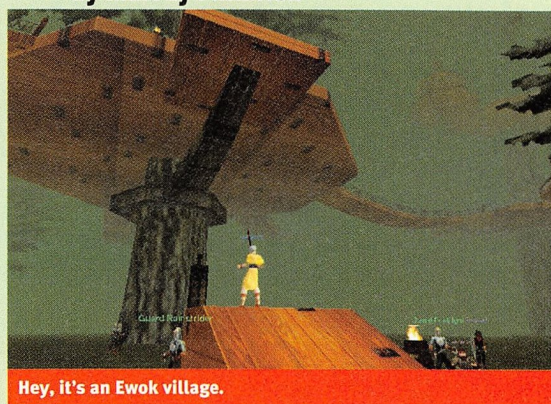
EverQuest is a big game. The world it entails, Norrath, contains thousands of people roaming the lands, fighting heroic deeds, and just generally getting (virtually) drunk. Daunting? You bet it is! After you've installed the game, a cursory glimpse of the manual will no doubt leave you with a vague sense of "Cripes, what do I

do NOW? Where do I even start?"

Fear not! Have some form of caffeinated beverage and place some decent potato chips next to you, take a deep breath, and let PC PowerPlay you through the do's, and do NOT do's of the wonderful world of EverQuest.

### GETTING STARTED

Okay, the game's installed, well done! The



Hey, it's an Ewok village.

# SKILLS

Each skill ranges from 1-255 (with upcoming expansion packs to the game world and levels, though, expect that 255 cap to be raised somewhat in future). At various points in ranking, the skills have different titles used, ranging from "Awful" to "Master". Most skills will rise of their own accord, be it through practice, gaining levels, or what have you. You can also spend training points as you level, of course, but this can become quite expensive as your skills become quite good.

### Skill Levels

Points	Description
0-10	Awful
11-20	Feeble
21-30	Very Bad
31-40	Bad
41-50	Below Average
51-70	Average
71-80	Good
81-90	Very Good
91-100	Excellent
101-255	Master

**Abjuration:** One of the skills related to casting spells, this one

is used when casting defensive spells of some form (eg Shield of Flames, Shield of Thorns, etc).

**Alchemy:** A skill unique to Shamans, Alchemy allows them to concoct potions of various types. A Medicine Bag is required to use the skill.

**Alcohol Tolerance:** This skill represents a character's ability to withstand the effects of alcohol (drinking raises Stamina and Strength temporarily, but causes a character to sway from side to side and their vision to distort, as

well as be unable to speak clearly). The higher the tolerance, the less swaying and visual distortion you will experience.

**Alteration:** A skill which is used in casting spells that alter the state of the target's abilities in some way, or just alter reality in general.

**Apply Poison:** A skill unique to Rogues. If the skill is used successfully the weapon having the poison applied to it will be able to poison an opponent on a successful hit. Not implemented yet.





first thing to do is run the EverQuest tutorial (a different .exe file in the directory you installed the game to, called "tutorial.exe"). This will get you familiarised with the basic concepts of control and gameplay in the game proper. Don't worry if it's all a little confusing at first, things will eventually begin to make sense.

After you've gone through the tutorial, you'll need to connect to the

internet to create an account on Sony's game servers, known as "The Station". To do this, just load up the game as you normally would any other. Note that if you haven't installed shortcuts on the desktop or the start menu, you'll want to run the everquest.exe file. There are a few .exe files in the game directory, but this one runs the EverQuest patch file also, which should be run each time you load the game just in

case a new one has been released (Verant are very quick in getting out new patches for the game). This will take a few minutes on the first patch, so be patient, it'll get there.

After the patching is complete, a list of the various patch changes (recent ones, anyway) will be displayed. It's generally best to read through these when they appear. Such changes can include adjustments to spells,

classes, or general gameplay that isn't covered in the manual. If you don't want to be caught unawares as your spell that previously unleashed a huge fireball at a creature now throws daisies at them, this is where you'll find out about such things.

Once you've gone through all the initial splash screens, click on "Account" and then "New Account" and run through all the necessary details.

## GLOSSARY:

**1m, 2m, 3m, 4m, 5m** - Each an individual rating of how many "mana bubbles" a character has full. If the character has one bubble full of mana, then "1m" would be used, etc.

**AC** - Armour Class. A score ranging from 1-1000, dependant on many factors - level, armour worn, and a character's agility as well as several others (buffer spells etc) can increase or even reduce this score, which is a gauge of how difficult it is for a character to be hit. The higher the number, the harder it is to hit the character.

**Atk** - A score (ranging from 1-1000) that is a total sum of how good a character is at attacking in melee combat. Factors include strength, weapons used, current statistics, level, etc.

**Bind** - Relates to the spell "bind affinity". When this spell is cast on someone, the point the recipient is standing in is where he or she will be able to gate (see below) to, and defines where a player will reappear when he or she is killed. Can get confusing in role-playing circles where "Where are you bound?" could mean "Where will you reappear when you die?" or "Where are you heading?", but for the most part it means the former. Note that those able to cast the spells for themselves can bind themselves pretty much at any given point, while those who need to have it cast on them can

**Archery:** The skill related to firing bows of all sizes and types.

**Backstabbing:** The ability of the Rogue to stab an opponent in the back from behind, causing a great deal of damage.

**Baking:** One of the "trade skills". Allows characters to bake their own food types. Requires the use of an oven, which can be found in most major cities.

**Bash:** This skill is used by some melee classes, that allows the use of a shield as a battering weapon - which can stun and

wound an opponent. Requires a shield to use.

**Beg:** The ability to beg for small amounts of money from NPCs.

**Bind Wound:** For those classes without healing spells, bind wound is the next best thing. If the character has some bandages available to use in his or her inventory, bind wound allows the character to heal amounts of hit points up to 50% of the target's total amount.

**Block:** A skill unique to the Monk, blocking allows them to

deflect blows much as other melee classes are able to parry.

**Brass Instruments:** A unique Bard skill, this allows Bards to use brass instruments. Some Bard songs require a brass instrument to be played in order to cast them.

**Brewing:** Another trade skill, this one allows a character to brew alcoholic drinks. Requires a still to use, which can be found in most cities.

**Channeling:** The ability of a spellcaster to cast spells more quickly, as well as to be able to

regain concentration after being hit and continue casting a spell.

**Common Tongue:** The ability to speak the language "Common Tongue".

**Conjuration:** A spellcasting skill allowing you to create things out of thin air, be it weapons, bandages, or an elemental.

**Dark Speech:** The ability to speak what is commonly called "Dark Speech" throughout Norrath - a language common to Dark Elves, Trolls, and Ogres.

**Defense:** A generalised ability

SKILLS



## GLOSSARY:

► only be bound in major towns or cities.

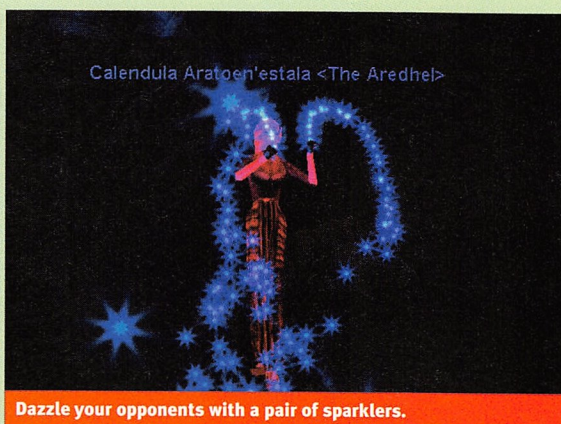
**Bubble(s)** - Many of EverQuest's ratings (current hit points, current mana, amount of experience to the next level, and remaining stamina) are measured not in figures but by a row of five "bubbles", and this term is used when describing various things, ie "I'm on two bubbles of health" or "Two bubbles to go till the next level". In the game, red = hit points, blue = mana, yellow = stamina, and orange = experience into the current level.

**Buff** - Short for "buffer". Spells which increase the abilities of a character are labelled "buffer spells".

**Con** - Short for "consider", this refers to (usually) the colour of writing that shows up when you right-click on a potential opponent.

"What does it con?" is an oft-heard question, for instance. As you gain in levels, different creatures will con differently to you, and you will find that there are several different types of each colour (green = no problem, blue = slightly worse than you, white = even to you, yellow = slightly better than you, and red = much too powerful for you). Anything white is fairly risky, and at later levels even blue can require a party to fight safely.

**Colour of Name** - While not theoretically a term actually used in the game, it is worth a mention that the various name colours of things do have a



Dazzle your opponents with a pair of sparklers.

At the time of writing, the first month of play is free, after which there are varying costs depending on how many months you purchase at once (note that the charges listed are in US dollars). The charges are by the month, not by the hour, and are available (again, at the time of writing) in 1, 3, and 6 month blocks.

Once your account is set up, click on "connect", enter your Station username and password, and you're in!

## OKAY, NOT QUITE...

The next thing you should (hopefully) see is a list of server names (each

server is named after one of the gods in the game) and how many players are currently in each. At the bottom of the screen there are "News", "Chat", and "Exit" buttons, respectively. There will also occasionally be a scrolling bar of text along the top of the screen informing people logging in of any problems or unexpected downtime on servers.

Hitting the news button will let you read over any news that would

have shown up in the patch box when you loaded the game. It's basically there so you can re-read it when necessary. The chat button leads you to the usual kind of chat room, divided into various channels (general, one for each server, and several other more specialised ones that are fairly self-explanatory, such as PvP or roleplaying).

## CHOOSING A SERVER.

As mentioned, there are 20 different servers

on which you can play.

There is also a "test server" which can only be entered by running the testeverquest.exe file. This server can be played on just like any of the others, except any changes made that would require a patch on the other servers are tested on it first (funnily enough).

Each server is its own independent world of Norrath. You can have up to 8 different characters on EACH server, but the characters cannot be switched from one server to another.

You'll probably need to take a few attempts at



The cast of Everquest: would you claim to be friends with these guys?

# SKILLS

► score as to how good your abilities at defense are. Goes up with levels.

**Disarm**: A skill allowing you to bash the weapon out of an opponent's hand, which can be very useful against an opponent wielding a powerful weapon. Pick it up off the ground before they can!

**Disarm Traps**: A unique skill to Rogues allowing them to disarm damaging or lethal traps before they are triggered.

**Divination**: The spellcasting

ability of Divination is the one relating to viewing things - or not viewing them. Spells such as invisibility fall under this category.

**Dodge**: The ability to move out of the way of a potentially damaging hit from an opponent.

**Double Attack**: A skill allowing two attacks to be made in the time it takes to attack once. Note that this skill is not an every round thing, but depends more on your skill level to determine how often you will get two swings. Note also that this affects

only your primary weapon, and not any dual-wielded secondary weapon.

**Dragon Punch**: Unique attack of the Monk class.

**Dual Wield**: This skill allows a character to hold and use one weapon in each hand (both must be one-handed, of course), resulting in more swings at an opponent.

**Eagle Strike**: Special Monk attack.

**Elder Elvish**: Ability to speak and understand Elder Elvish.

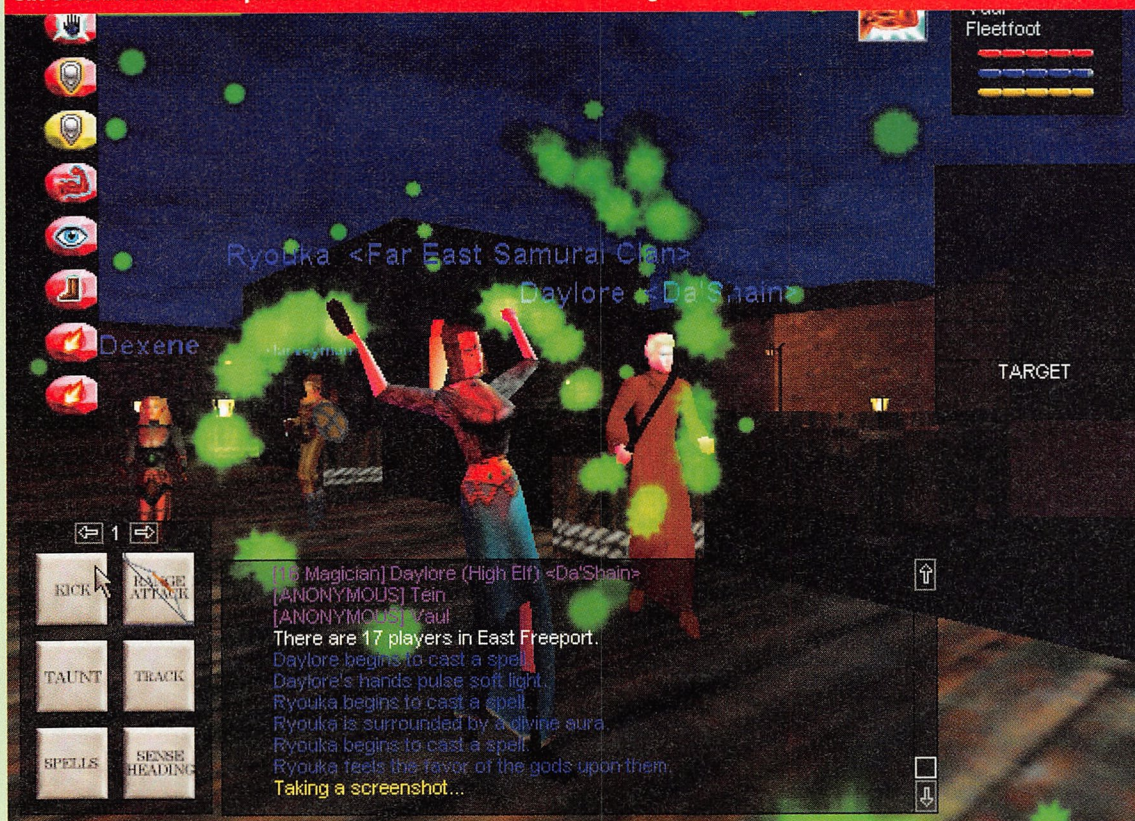
**Evocation**: A spellcasting skill relating to casting powerful energies at an opponent in a (generally) offensive manner, eg spells such as Lightning Bolt, Flame Bolt, etc.

**Feign Death**: A unique Monk ability which, when triggered, makes any foes attacking you believe you are dead and turn to another foe. Just remember to stop attacking before you trigger it or it won't work.

**Fishing**: As it would imply, this is the skill related to how good you



She's still at it with those sparklers. We've never had ones that last that long!



finding a server that suits your playing style. Each server differs in how the majority of its players play the game from minor to major ways, and some are set aside specifically for a certain purpose (Rallor Zek, for example, is a PvP server for those who wish to be able to slaughter others mercilessly), and there is a rumoured "race war" server being set up in which certain racial factions are allied or hate one another.

Every once in a while a new server will be set up to accommodate more and more players. The most recent two, Prexxus and Quellious, will have the most even footing for new players, whereas the busiest (in general) seem to be Fennin Ro and Veeshan, so if you want help from higher-level players, they could be the ones to play on.

Another thing to bear in mind is that while all the servers carry names of

the various gods of Norrath, it doesn't mean that those playing on that server will act in any way at all like the god it is named after.

## CREATING A CHARACTER

To quote Homer Simpson, "...people can make up statistics to prove anything... forty percent of all people know that!" Fear not, though, the statistics and

various other bits of information featured in EQ actually prove useful - and, even better, they're NOT made up! At this stage though, go with the flow when creating a character - there's no particular advantage going one way or another. Simply create the character you would like to ROLE PLAY, and don't forget to make sure they look good!

## GLOSSARY:

meaning. Blue is a regular player, purple is someone who has their /roleplay flag turned on, light red is someone who is a +PvP player, dark red is a +PvP player who has their /roleplay flag turned on, cyan (aqua blue) is a monster or NPC, and green is one of the game's GMs or Guides.

**DoT** - Damage over Time spells. Spells that gradually chew away at an opponent's hit points after being cast on it, rather than damaging a lot in the one hit.

**Duel** - Players who are not +PvP (see PvP, below) can still fight another by issuing a duel challenge to another. If the person challenged accepts, both can fight until one is dead or flees the zone (see below).

**FoH** - Full on Health. A character saying this is at their maximum total hit points.

**Gate** - A spell which teleports the caster to their set "bind" point.

**GM/Guide** - A character in the game who is pretty much a supervisor on behalf of the game's creators, in the case of GMs, and Guides, in the case of players helping with that task.

**Hybrid** - Classes which are able to fight well in hand to hand AND cast spells are known as hybrid classes. Such classes incur a 25% experience penalty per level (ie they need 25% more experience per level than a class that concentrates purely on casting or fighting).

are at fishing. Fishing can yield all manner of items, from the odd mouldy sandal through to an actual fish. You need to be holding a fishing rod and have some bait in your inventory to be able to use the skill - not to mention be next to water in some form, of course.

**Fletching**: A trade skill allowing for construction of arrows and bows. Requires a fletching kit to be used.

**Flying Kick**: The most powerful Monk attack (unique).

**Forage**: Rangers, Druids, and Wood Elves all have this very useful ability, which allows food and drink to be scrounged up from the surrounding area, making them quite self-sufficient to a point.

**Hand-to-Hand**: The ability to attack without a weapon.

**Hide**: The ability to vanish into your surroundings. Note that you can't move while hiding, or you will become visible. Note also that you won't actually know if you're hiding or not for certain,

even if you LOOK to be hiding - often the first you'll know about it not working is being attacked by a passing monster.

**Instill Doubt**: A skill which strikes doubt into the heart of an opponent, causing them to turn and run. A very useful skill in the right circumstances.

**Jewel Craft**: A trade skill allowing for gem and stone cutting, as well as crafting of fine jewelry. Can be a very profitable trade to learn, but is expensive to practice. Requires a Jewelry Kit to use.

**Kick**: An extra attack available to some melee classes. Do not underestimate the effectiveness of a swift kick to your opponent between sword swings.

**Make Poison**: The Rogue ability to brew their own poisonous concoctions.

**Meditate**: One of a spellcaster's most loved and valued skills, meditation gradually improves the rate you can scribe and memorise spells, as well as regain lost mana.

**Mend Wounds**: A unique Monk

# SKILLS



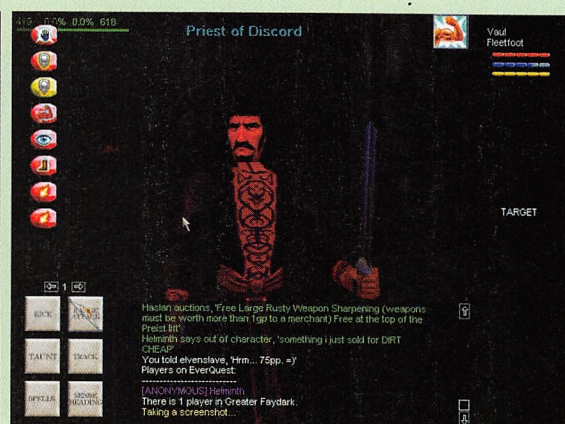
## GLOSSARY:

► **Kiting** - A much-maligned way of killing a creature. Some casters use damage over time spells on a creature and then run, occasionally re-casting the spells once they have worn off, thereby gradually wearing the creature down at virtually no self-risk, a method labelled "kiting".

**KSer** - Kill Stealer, someone who steals away another person's kill in some form or another. It is quite possible (unfortunately) to fight something for quite a while and then lose the experience from the kill as someone out-damages you suddenly. Kill-stealing is made possible in that whoever does the most damage to a given creature at its point of death will gain experience for it.

**Languages** - While not a term used, this feature is thoroughly undocumented, which most people find disconcerting given there is no mention of how to select the language you are currently using. You need to be in the windowed mode, then right-click on the text box, and you'll be able to select which language you are currently speaking. Anyone not fluent in the language will see a garbled message - along the lines of "sxmldr dr jhrs whn".

**LOM** - Low on mana.  
**Med** - Meditate, usually used as an indicator that the person saying it needs to meditate, or is telling another to, but

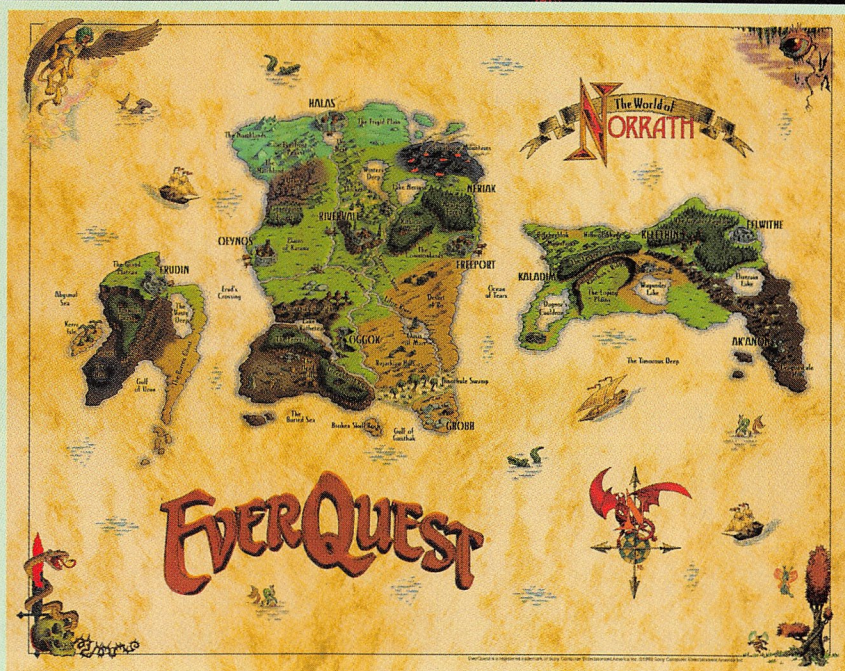


(right) The map: a surefire sign of a good RPG.

## THE EQ BEGINNERS GUIDE TO NORRATH

"Enough with the character creation and the rest already! I want to hurt things!"

And hurt things you shall! The question is, of course, where do you start? And after you start, what next? Below are some beginner hints and tips for adventuring throughout the world of Norrath.



## LEVELS 1-5

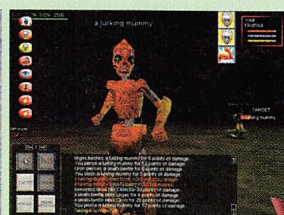
Okay, you're in the game for the first time, standing in, or just outside of, your main city. A couple of things you'll want to do right away are:

1) change your attack

key from the letter "a" to something else that preferably isn't a letter of the alphabet, or any other character you'll use often in typing (many a person has died an untimely death by accidentally attacking a powerful NPC

while trying to talk - it's not a pleasant experience)

2) open your inventory and right-click on the note you should have there. Don't destroy the note, whatever you do. It should tell you who in your guild and starting city you need



# SKILLS

► ability that can heal a great deal of damage. Note that if it is used incorrectly it can actually cause harm to the Monk, rather than healing (this is a random thing based on your skill).

**Offense**: Your overall ability to attack in melee.

**Old Erudian**: Ability to speak and understand Old Erudian.

**One-Hand Blunt**: A skill allowing a character to use a blunt weapon that requires only one hand to wield.

**One-Hand Slashing**: The skill

allowing a character to wield a weapon that uses a bladed edge and one hand to attack with it.

**Parry**: The ability to deflect a blow using your weapon.

**Percussion**: A Bardic ability allowing them to play percussion instruments (drums, etc).

**Pick Lock**: Rogue-only skill allowing locked doors and the like to be picked open, thereby avoiding having to search for and gain a key.

**Pick Pocket**: A skill allowing NPCs and monsters to have coins

pilfered from their pockets (or other characters if the picker and... uhh... pickee are both PvP+).

**Piercing**: The ability to wield a weapon which relies on a piercing motion to cause damage (daggers, rapiers). This is the only weapon type able to be used for a backstabbing attack, so it is important to Rogues.

**Pottery**: A trade skill allowing for various types of pottery to be constructed. Requires clay, a pottery wheel, and a kiln

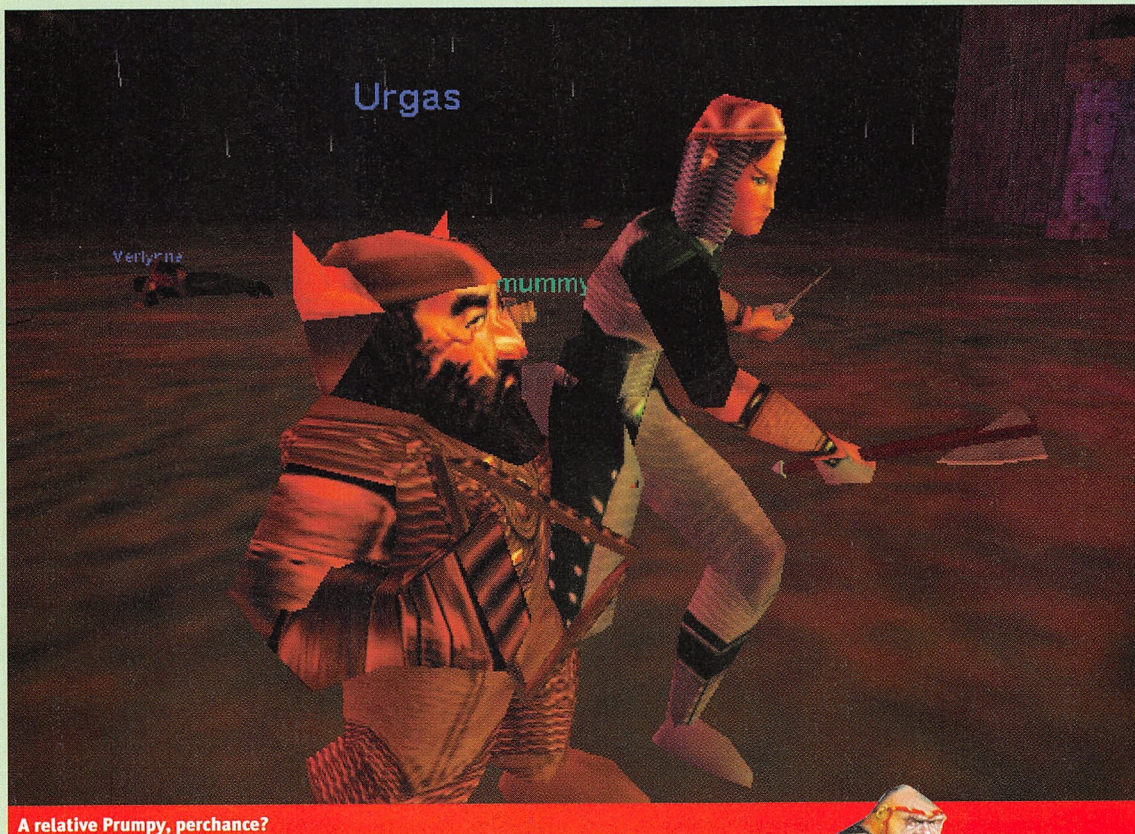
(available in most cities).

**Research**: A special skill allowing for spellcasting classes to research and create their own spell types by discovering formulae and combining components into a spell.

**Riposte**: A high-level melee maneuver which allows an opponents attack to be parried and actually inflicted back upon themselves.

**Round Kick**: A special Monk attack. More damaging than a normal kick.





A relative Prumpy, perchance?

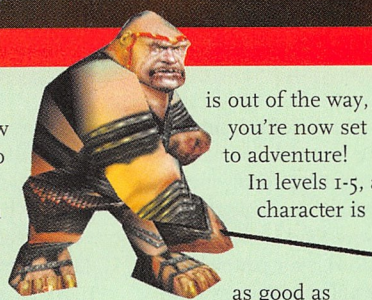
to find to get started. Head into your guild, and give the letter to the person named on it. You only get the one note, so make sure you're handing it to the right person or it will be lost, and no guild for you. Once you've done that, open your inventory and put on the piece of clothing you should have (of some type) and arm your weapon. Spellcasters should scribe the spells gained into their spellbooks.

Having done this, find one of your guild's trainers (right-click on them as you would with any shopkeeper) and spend the few training points you have on various skills. Most skills used need to have one training point

spent on them before they will begin to raise with practice, so choose them carefully. In general, melee classes will want to spend at least one point on the weapon type they have currently, and spellcasting classes will want to spend at least one point on each of the various spell schools (Abjuration, Conjuraton, etc). You don't need to use up all the training points, but it tends to be a good idea. You can also put more than one training point on a given skill, but bear in mind that you get an extra 5 points to spend each time you gain a level, as well as that when your skills become a bit higher, it will actually cost money AND a training point to raise them by just a single

point, so choose carefully. For now it could be best to spread them around, one each on several skills you know you'll wish to use.

Now that's done, if you wish to be a PvP player (not recommended so early on in your existence) take the book in your inventory to the Priest of Discord. There is one at every city, usually quite near the main entrance. If you're sure you won't want to be a PvP player, you can destroy the book, or alternatively store it in one of the bank vault slots. You have 8 slots in which you can store items, so it might be a good idea to store it there. After all this



is out of the way, you're now set to adventure!

In levels 1-5, a character is

as good as

invulnerable, in a manner of speaking. Chances are you'll die, but the upside is that when you come back you will not have lost any experience (as you do once you reach level 6 and over) and you'll still have a weapon and armour on your person. This makes getting back to your corpse not as bad as later on when you will essentially have to do it unarmed and naked the majority of the time (not so bad for spellcasters, though, and hardly an issue for

## GLOSSARY:

also used in general conversation (ie "Med really helps out").

**Melee** - Classes which rely on their abilities at combat for survival rather than spellcasting are known as "melee classes".

**OOC** - Out of character. Both a channel (supposed to be) used for messages being able to be seen to all in the zone of the character using it, as well as a prefix for role-players saying things out of character in a sentence (ie "ooc- I'm getting bad lag").

**OOM** - Out of mana.

**Petition** - Refers to the /petition command, the command used to get in touch with an on-line GM or Guide to try and solve a problem or query. You can only have one petition in place at any given time.

**PL** - Abbreviation of "packet loss". People experiencing packet loss will vanish and reappear several times, making the game unplayable for them as it happens.

**Pure Caster** - Classes which rely fully on spells for their survival are known as pure casters (clerics and druids are not counted as pure casters, but are not melee classes or hybrids either).

**PvP** - Player versus Player combat. One player fighting another instead of the usual player versus monster. In addition, +PvP and -PvP indicate players who are constantly able to be fought without having to declare a duel. +PvP people can fight and

**Safe Fall:** An ability of both Monks and Rogues, this allows them to fall without sustaining any damage, or at the very least greatly reducing the amount of damage sustained.

**Sense Heading:** This skill is vital to not becoming lost when travelling over large land expanses with few distinct landmarks. It allows you to know the direction you are currently facing (North, SouthWest, etc).

**Sense Traps:** A Rogue's ability to detect a potentially dangerous

trap before it has been set off.

**Singing:** A Bardic ability to cast a song that requires no particular instrument, only their voice.

**Slam:** A combat ability common to all "large" races, a slam attack is one which causes the opponent to be stunned along with a small amount of damage. Very similar to "bash", but it is not class-specific.

**Smithing:** A trade skill allowing for the construction of many and various items of metal (not precious metals, though). Can be used to create armour once the

skill is high enough. Requires suitable ore types and a forge (found in most cities) to be used.

**Sneak:** An ability allowing a character to move silently. Note that when sneaking you will move at half your normal speed.

**Specialization:** At higher levels, spellcasters gain the ability to specialise in a particular school of magic (Divination, Evocation, etc). This allows that particular school's spells to be more effective when cast by the specialist, ie someone

specialising in Evocation would do more damage with a spell from that school than one who did not. Also makes spells require less time and mana to cast in the specialised school.

**Stringed Instruments:** The ability of the Bard to play a stringed instrument.

**Swimming:** An important skill, swimming determines how fast you can swim, how long you can stay submerged without coming up for breath, and how long you can swim for without becoming tired.



## GLOSSARY:

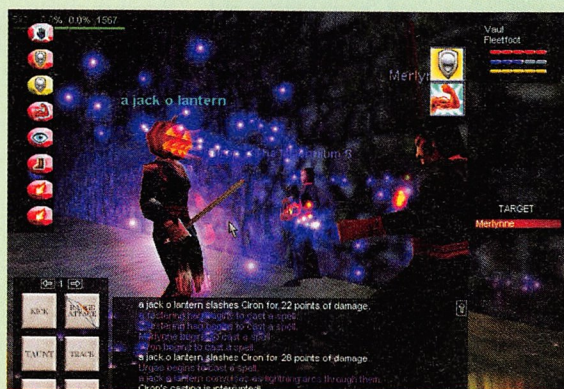
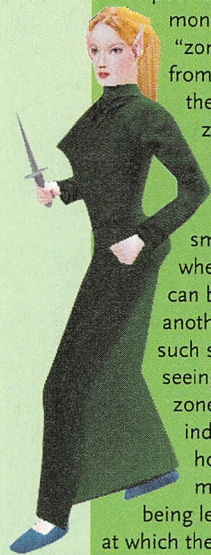
► **steal equipment** from the bodies of any fallen +PvP people at any given time without having to declare a duel.

**RP** - Roleplay. Anyone roleplaying is often referred to as an RPer.

**Train** - As well as the customary "I'm going to train to improve my skills", in EverQuest it indicates (usually over the shout channel) that a large horde of monsters that are chasing a poor individual or two are being run about the zone. Often accompanied by a location they are being led to, such as "Train to inn!" or "Train to zone!"

**Twink** - Term used to describe a player who has had a great deal of powerful equipment given to them by a friend at a level they normally would be unable to gain it at.

**Zone** - EverQuest's areas are divided up into "zones", or areas that are loaded up as you cross their defined borders. It is possible to flee from monsters by "zoning" (moving from one zone to the other). Some zones have open edges, but some have only small points where one zone can be exited and another entered. In such situations, seeing "Train to zone!" would indicate a large horde of monsters are being led to the point at which the zones meet.



**Bloody hell, that's a vicious pumpkin!**



**Sentences are the standard headwear in EverQuest.**



**That goblin isn't putting up much of a fight.**



**Prumpy!!!**

► **Monks**). Each time you die you will also gain a little more food - it is actually possible to gain more food if you can't afford it for yourself simply by letting yourself get killed and coming back - though this is obviously a last resort.

When hunting for the first few levels (basically 1-3), you'll want to stay sans-party and close to the town guards and kill the smaller creatures very close to the town's entrance. Be sure to right-click on EVERYTHING before you attack it. This cannot be stressed enough. Most creatures can look exactly the same but be quite a lot tougher, and considering (right-clicking) them first

will save you a lot of deaths and hassle. Basically, attack anything that is blue or green, white at the most if you're feeling confident. Anything yellow or red will most definitely make mince meat of you. The other thing to remember is that if you are being soundly beaten, don't hesitate to run to the guards, and they will kill anything trying to kill you (so long as it wasn't a creature or NPC they are friendly towards).

Another important thing to note is that money is fairly scarce in EverQuest until higher levels. Therefore, at lower levels, be sure to pick up EVERYTHING from any creature you kill if you can (right-clicking on their

corpse will allow you to loot it) - even rat whiskers will fetch a few coins from most vendors, and you'll need to scrimp and save to begin to get anywhere. Also, note that if you see a creature holding a weapon in its hand, not only will it use it to attack you, but you will be able to loot it if/when you kill it (rusty weapons at these levels - skeletons, in particular, are good for these, and they can occasionally fetch a gold piece or two). You may also wish to begin practicing a trade skill of some kind, but these alone can be very

expensive, and will not bring you in a decent profit until you are VERY good at them (and even in some cases not then).

Congratulations, you survived "the wonder years" and you've now got a strong foothold into the world of being an adventurer! Around now you'll be able to begin to strike out a little further from the protective eyes of the town guards (you won't want to stray TOO far, though), probably with a party. Not far from most very low-level areas (a little way into the next zone, at worst) there should be some form of area where you can begin to test your newfound skills. ■



**This werewolf obviously excels at the Horizontal skill.**

# SKILLS

► **Tailoring**: A trade skill allowing for leather and cloth armour to be sewn. Requires a tailoring kit, pattern, and a pelt of some variety (depends on the armour's type and size).

**Taunt**: A skill used to gain the attention of an opponent so it will attack the taunter instead of another. Useful for getting an opponent away from a spellcaster or a comrade on low hit points.

**Throwing**: The ability relating to the use of hurled weapons, such

as daggers, throwing axes, spears, and shurikens.

**Tiger Claw**: A special Monk attack.

**Tinkering**: A Gnome-specific trade skill allowing for the construction of all kinds of weird and wonderful items such as a direction finder (compass), special bow types, magical lanterns, etc. Requires a toolbox.

**Thieves Cant**: The ability of Rogues to speak and understand Thieves' Cant, their own secret language.

**Track**: An ability much like a personal radar, tracking allows the user to find creatures or people over large distances, as well as simply detect their presence.

**Two-Handed Blunt**: A weapon ability regarding the use of blunt weapons that require two hands to use.

**Two-Handed Slashing**: The ability to use a two-handed weapon requiring a blade to slash with for damage.

**Ultravision**: A dark-elfen only form of vision allowing them to see much better in the dark than those even with infravision.

**Wind Instruments**: Instruments such as horns, pipes, etc that a Bard is required to play for some song-spells are governed by this skill.



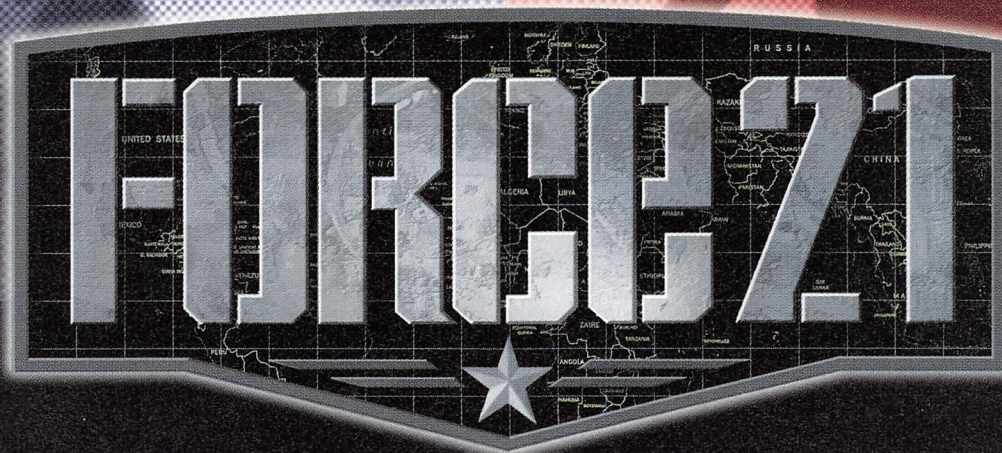
# WORLD WAR III

## WORLD DOMINANCE

### 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY WARFARE



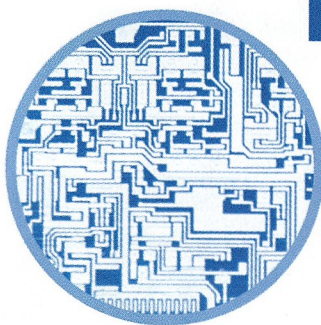
**THIS AIN'T A TEA PARTY**



PETT 992345

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# TECHNEWS

## LOGITECH MOUSE

### THE WORLD'S FIRST FORCE FEEDBACK MOUSE!

Has surfing the 'Net lost its appeal? Is that session of Excel missing a little something, say, dynamic? Then you'll be pleased to know that Logitech are working on a force feedback mouse that's set to usher in a new age of computer control and satisfaction. Though Logitech haven't officially announced this new technological wonder yet, they have loosely revealed the working principle of the device. Trackers around the mouse ball will also transmit the force feedback to the user. Not only will the unit rumble, but resistance will also be possible on mouse movement. While these features may sound lost on all but game titles, there may be practical applications of force feedback in other mouse-oriented computer areas. Expect a detailed report soon after we get our hands on the thing.

Silicon State-of-the-Art with Hugh Norton-Smith

# CPU NEWS

## AMD

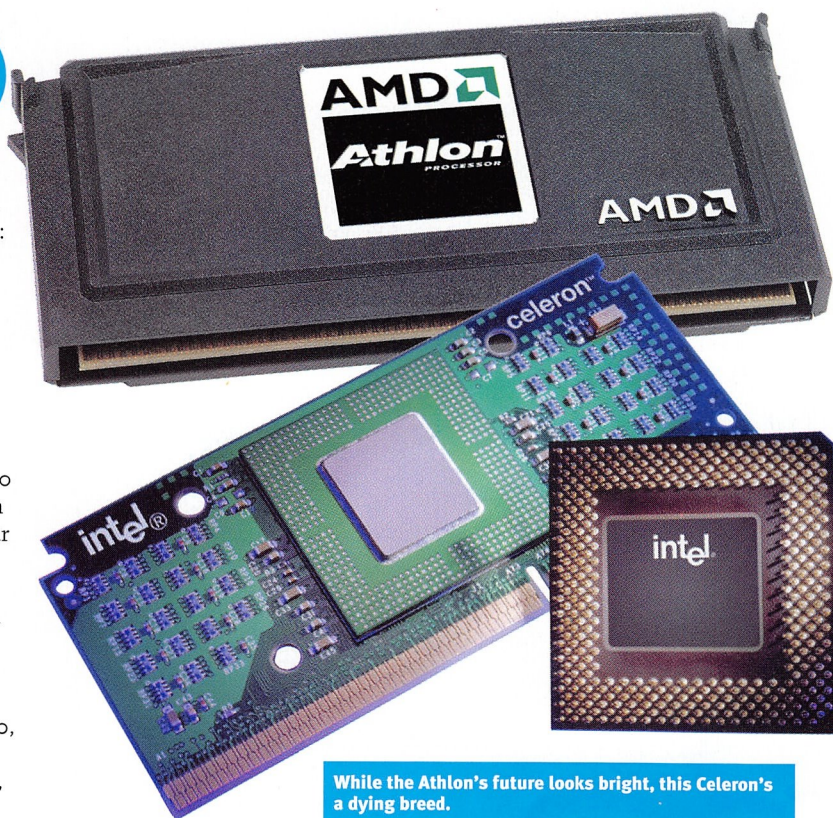
Retailers have just announced some rudimentary prices for AMD Athlon processors within Australia. Supposed unit prices are as follows:

**Athlon-500 OEM:** \$590  
**Athlon-550 OEM:** \$1060  
**Athlon-600 OEM:** \$1420  
**Athlon-650 OEM:** \$2300

The only Athlon that is priced within the range of an average gamer is the 500mhz piece. At \$590 it is priced in line with the Pentium III 500, making it a great buy in our minds. In our tests, gamers can expect considerably more performance from an Athlon over a similarly clocked Pentium III. The real question with the Athlon is the motherboards available: the new boards are priced at just under \$300, making them more expensive than an equivalent Intel BX board. In all, gamers on a higher budget really can't go wrong with the Athlon's huge floating-point performance and large bus speeds. Expect a hefty price reduction in the near future, in line with Intel's price cuts in their Pentium III range.

## INTEL

Intel have just axed the extremely overclocker friendly Celeron 366 CPU to everyone except large computer manufacturers. The last few batches we've seen have had a large chance of reaching 550MHz



While the Athlon's future looks bright, this Celeron's a dying breed.

with very little tweaking. Two Celeron 366s in an Abit BP6 dual motherboard are a particularly cost effective system. Some retailers have stockpiled 366 chips, so hopefully a few should be around for several more weeks. The Celeron 400 is now the slowest clocked processor in Intel's line-up and our current favourite. If you are prepared to put up with 83MHz bus speeds, the Celeron 400 will almost always reach a very acceptable 500 MHz.

Intel has also decided to cut the Pentium III 450 line, not too soon after the higher-end price cuts.

Expect Pentium III 450s to start disappearing in the next week or two. The Pentium III 450 is the most overclockable Pentium III to date, due to its relatively low multiplier setting and the great yields. As far as we're concerned, the Pentium III 550 and 600 don't offer the performance level to justify their exorbitant cost. For die-hard Intel fans, I suggest that you either buy something at a better price/performance point, or alternatively wait for the arrival of the Intel Coppermine CPU.



# QUICKBYTES

## Athlon Motherboards

So far, only four AMD Athlon boards have been announced. FIC, MSI (Microstar), Aopen and Gigabyte are the first hardware vendors to release motherboard solutions for the AMD Athlon. All feature a very similar feature list, with none including any native overclocking facilities. The Aopen AK-71 features ATA/66 UltraDMA support for faster hard disk transfer speeds. The Aopen board is also manufactured on a high quality 6 layer PCB board. Stability is excellent across all the boards that we've tested. The success of the Athlon will depend on decent motherboard support; whilst the processor has been shown to be extremely fast and manufactured in decent quantity, there remains the question of chipset and motherboard availability. Manufacturers are reluctant to jump on the bandwagon due to the high price of chipsets and the small amount of Athlon chips currently on the market.

## Overclocking the Athlon

The Athlon is meant to be a formidable overclocker, even with the standard heatsink fan unit and

**"No Athlon boards include any native overclocking facilities."**

using the default voltage. Purportedly the Athlon 600 reaches 700MHz with relative ease, giving you the fastest x86 processor available. We're experimenting with the Athlon's overclocking potential as you read, and will report fully on what's achievable in the next issue.

## Hercules out of Business?

One of the most respected and overclocker friendly hardware manufacturers, Hercules, have gone out of business. Hercules have received particular acclaim for their Dynamite TNT2 Ultra, which shipped at speeds significantly faster than the competition. With Hercules leaving the ring, it looks like the Guillemot Xentor 32 might just be the fastest TNT2 Ultra card that money can buy. Although not many Hercules products reach Australian shores, you should still be able to snap up the Dynamite TNT2 Ultra from some retailers,

albeit at somewhat extortionate prices. Current orders are expected to be fulfilled.

## Abit HotRod ATA/66

PC users have been using ATA/33 hard disk drives ever since the advent of the Quantum Fireball ST, several years back. The emerging hard disk standard is Ultra DMA ATA/66, which allows for twice the bandwidth of ATA/33. The question remains about the usefulness of ATA/66. Most hard disks and controllers never even come close to the maximum potential throughput of ATA/33 drives, let alone the excessive bandwidth of ATA/66. However, it's reassuring to know that your computer is future proof and able to use any upcoming hardware to the limits of its capabilities. So far, only two commonly available motherboards support ATA/66 natively: the Abit BE6 and the Abit BP6. If you already own a relatively new mainboard and don't feel like upgrading, Abit have released the Hot Rod ATA/66 PCI card. The

Hot Rod slots into a spare PCI slot and allows for the connection of another four ATA/66 devices. Besides giving you the functionality of ATA/66, you also get the added bonus of four more IDE connectors for maximum system expandability.

## Intel Moves Out of Graphics Business

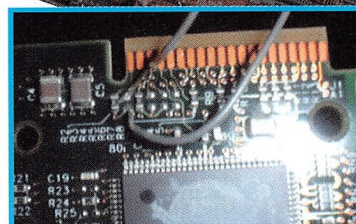
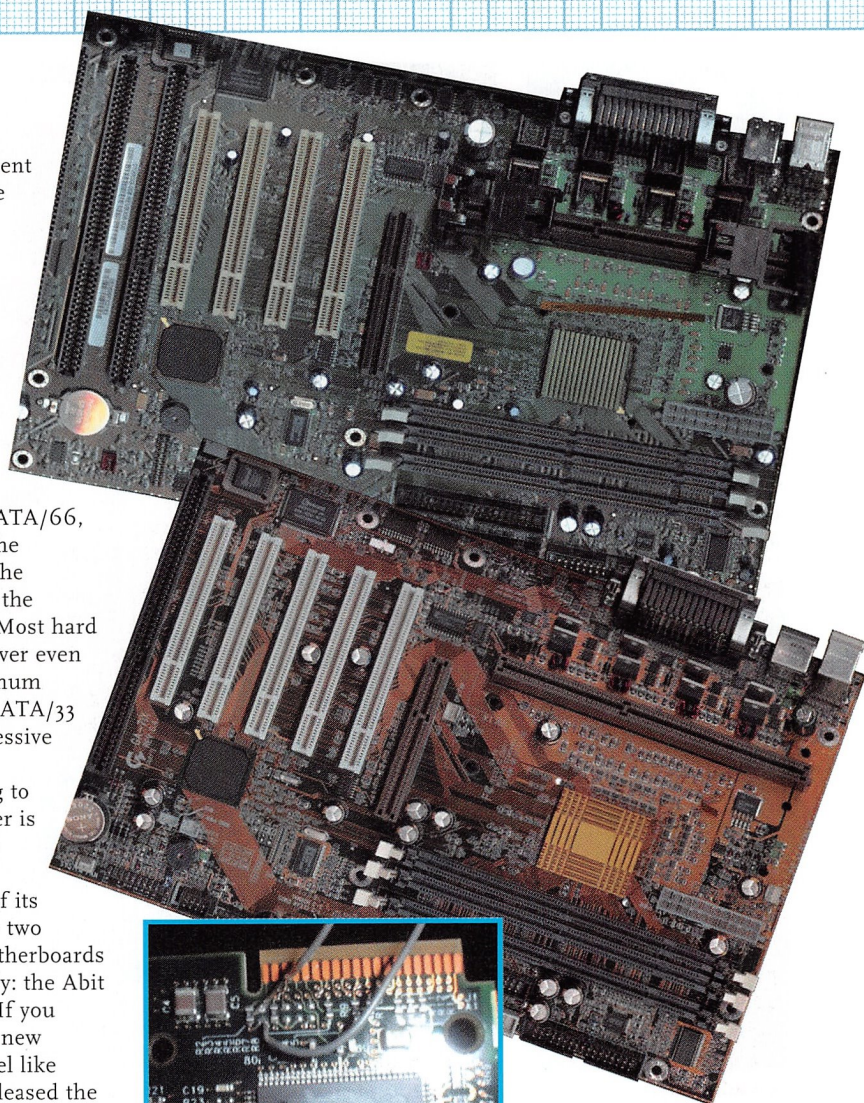
Meanwhile, Intel have decided to pull out of the hyper-competitive graphics card marketplace. Their i740 chipset was a modest success, but performance was well below satisfactory - particularly in comparison to the advanced designs achieved by 3dfx, ATI, nVidia and Matrox. Despite excellent image quality, the i740 lacked the all-important second texture mapping unit and sufficient clock speed to make it a viable gamers choice. With i740 chips selling for less than \$10US and significantly smaller profit margins, the graphics business is much less lucrative than

it was a year back.

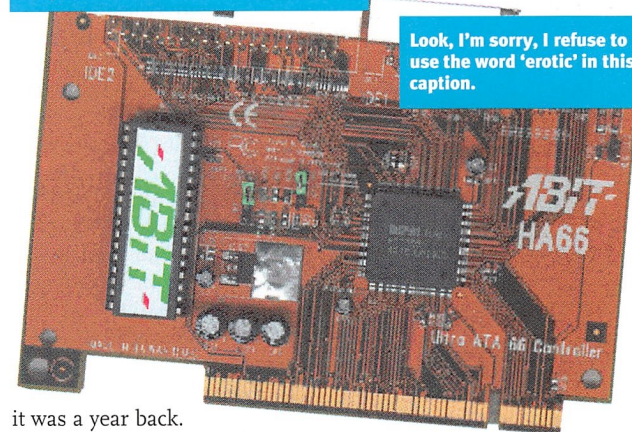
No future products have been planned, and the Intel i752 project has been canned for the moment, despite the almost complete version of the silicon.

## DRAM Prices Go Up

Taiwanese DRAM manufacturers have announced that DRAM prices will go up again. Up until last month, we've seen a steady drop in DRAM prices. However, in the past few weeks there has been a sudden increase in prices, as Taiwanese manufacturers finish off the stockpile of PC100 they had accumulated



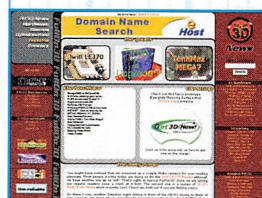
Your computer's innards in close-up. Sexy, huh?



Look, I'm sorry, I refuse to use the word 'erotic' in this caption.

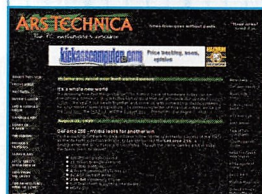


## WEB

HARDWARE  
LINKS OF  
THE MONTH

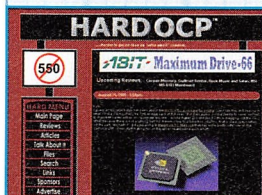
[www.fullon3d.com](http://www.fullon3d.com)

Great information for anything 3D related.



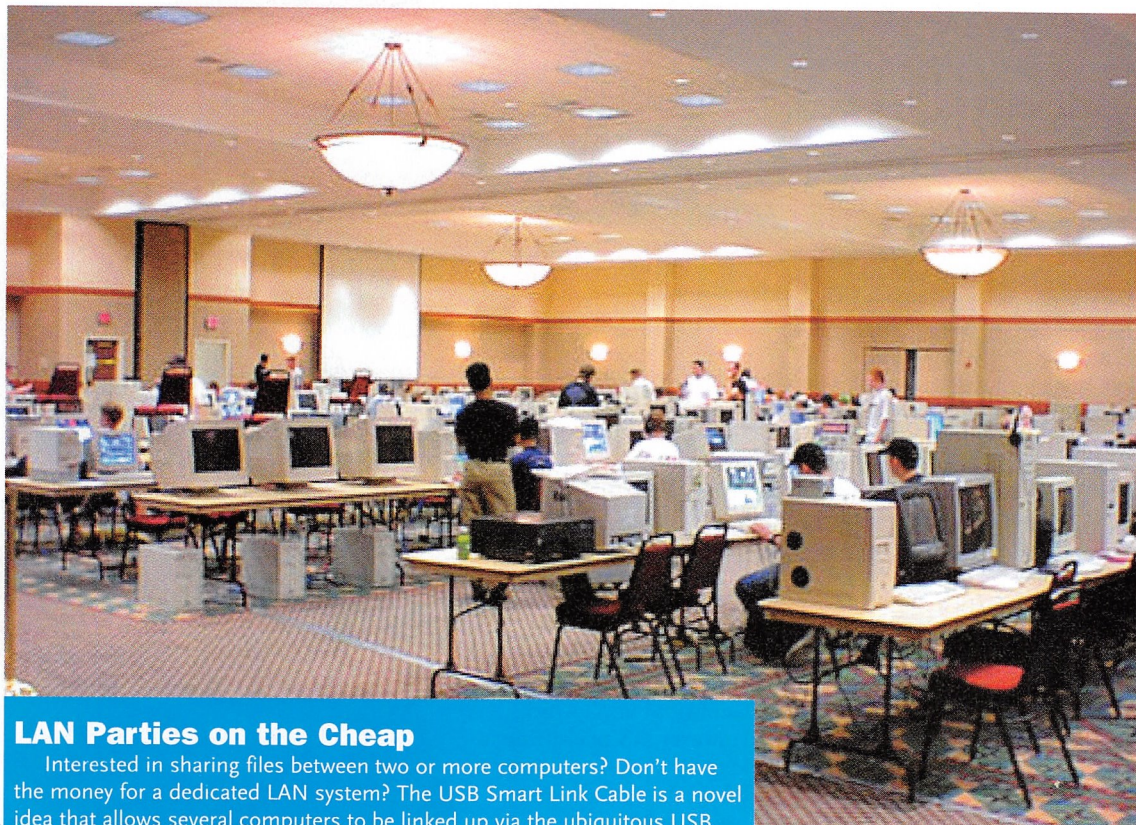
[www.arstechnica.com](http://www.arstechnica.com)

The PC Enthusiast's Resource.



[www.hardocp.com](http://www.hardocp.com)

Extreme Overclocking.



## LAN Parties on the Cheap

Interested in sharing files between two or more computers? Don't have the money for a dedicated LAN system? The USB Smart Link Cable is a novel idea that allows several computers to be linked up via the ubiquitous USB port on your computer. The connection is damned close to the speed of a 10mbps network, for much less. At 6mbps it is far faster than a laplink cable, and should allow for hassle-free Quaking. The USB Smart Link is fully plug and play compatible, and comes with software that allows for all standard-networking requirements. The Smart Link sells for less than \$30, for a single male/male adaptor.

before demand picked up. Current prices for a 64mb DRAM is US\$8.16, although a top of US\$10 has been forecast. On a side note, Simens PC133 memory is now on sale in Australia. Although current Intel chipsets don't officially support PC133, some Via motherboards will allow for 133MHz RAM. The upcoming Intel i820 Camino chipset will come with built in support for both PC133 DIMMs and RIMM modules. PC133 RAM is priced significantly higher than similarly sized PC100 DIMMs due to the more complex manufacturing process and the lower successful yields.

## TNT2 M64

A word of warning to all unsuspecting gamers who are looking for a new graphics card: nVidia has released a bastardised version of the TNT2, which offers performance significantly worse than a full-featured TNT2. The M64 has begun to flood the market, preying upon buyer ignorance. For instance, Creative are selling their M64

boards as 'TNT2 Value' boards. There is no marking to indicate that you are buying an inferior product. If

## Gates: 2000 Will Ship this Year

Bill Gates, head Microsoft honcho, has confirmed that the eagerly anticipated Windows 2000 operating

system will be released before the end of the year. "We are very close to the final shipment," Gates told some 1,200 managers here at Dell Computer Corp.'s DirectConnect conference. "We're pretty sure the builds will go final by the end of the year." Windows 2000 is the latest incarnation of the ever-popular OS, featuring a modified Windows NT kernel. Unlike Windows 95 and 98, Windows 2000 is fully 32 bit, which translates to increased stability, speed and support for multiple processors. Although the Win98 interface remains largely intact, Win2000 will offer a host of other improvements. However, gamers might want to retain their copy of Win98 for the moment; Win2000 is not compatible with many legacy games, although most of the current crop of titles should work fine on the new OS. The final beta version of Windows 2000 should be released in the coming weeks for paying beta testers. ■

## SPECULAR SPOTLIGHT

Computer Artworks' Evolve was the game nVidia chose to show off their GeForce 256 at this year's ECTS. Read all about this amazing video card over the page...



Graphics  
Blaster  
RIVA TNT2  
Value

Cheap - in every sense of the word.





[ tau ]

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# NEXT-GEN 3D POWER UNLEASHED

## GEFORCE 256 & S3 SAVAGE 2000 VIDEO CARDS

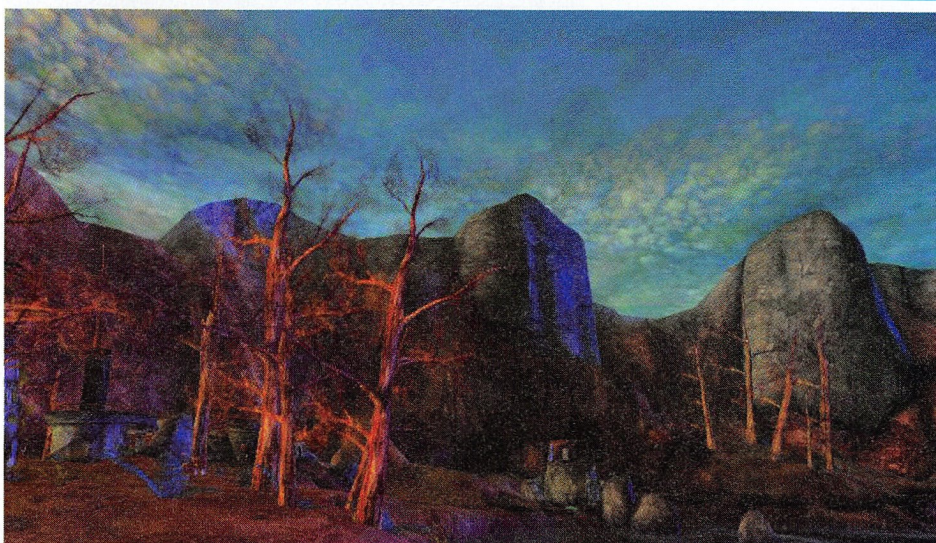
Hugh Norton-Smith examines the latest entries in the 3D video card race

The computer hardware industry has reached a decent plateau: few people can complain about the state of graphics in most games. All of the current crop of cards can produce decent frame rates and picture quality. However, there are still several areas that need improvement. Very few people, for example, can run most games with all the graphical bells and whistles, at huge frame rates and resolutions. For instance, Quake 3 in 32-bit colour at 1600x1200 resolution is still something of a pipe dream. What the industry needs is better hardware lighting support, even higher clockspeeds and other architectural improvements. Thankfully, this is all about to change. In the past week, two of the industries largest graphics card manufacturers have announced their next-generation chipsets. Each offers a quantum leap in gaming power and a host of other innovative features.

### GEFORCE 256 SPECIFICATIONS

- 480 million pixels per second
- 32 texture samples per clock
- Full speed, 8-tap anisotropic filtering
- 15 Million triangles/second
- Sustained DMA, transform/clip/light, setup, rasterize and render rate
- More than 70% of the chip active at all times
- Up to 6 triangles "in flight" at a time (normally 1-3)
- Super-pipelined for very low latency between engines
- Cube Environment Mapping
- Vertex Blending
- 256-bit Rendering Pipeline
- 8 hardware lights
- 350 MHz RAMDAC
- AGP 4X with Fast Writes
- Highest Quality HDTV video playback
- Environmental Bump Mapping
- DirectX Texture Compression

## nVidia GeForce 256

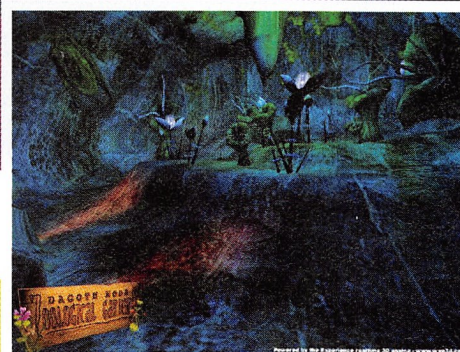


It's only been a few months since the release of the awesome TNT2 Ultra, and already nVidia has finished the design of its latest board. Originally known as the NV10, the GeForce 256 name is derived from the amalgamation of 'G-Force' and 'Geometry'. The '256' suffix is indicative of the enormous 256-bit architecture.

The most important part of the GeForce256 is its integrated Graphics Processing Unit (GPU). This much-touted addition essentially takes pressure away from the CPU by performing Transform and Lighting (T&L) calculations. A GPU is a single-chip processor



nVIDIA



with integrated transform, lighting, and triangle setup and rendering engines. It is also capable of producing a minimum of 10 million polygons per second, with all graphical luxuries included.

Traditionally, CPUs have carried out all the geometry calculations in games, whilst the graphics cards are left to 'render' polygons in unison with the CPU. With the GPU handling all the Transform and lighting calls, the CPU is left to carry out other important tasks including





The GeForce 256 powering the Experience 3D engine. See Spotlight for more info on this promising game.

better AI, networking and sound. The great part is that people will be able to get amazing performance out of comparatively low-end processors (300 MHz Pentium II). Support for T&L will be included natively in DirectX 7.

The GeForce 256 also includes four pixel pipes, allowing for four calculations in tandem (the TNT2 features two pixel pipelines). Even at the same clock speed as the TNT2, and with T&L disabled, the GeForce256 should perform at least twice as fast as its forerunner. The fill rate you ask? A staggering 490 megapixels/second. This is over twice the fill rate of a TNT2, which lacks T&L as well as the quad texel engine. In simple terms, a high fill rate counts for more detailed virtual objects due to the superior polygon count.

In all, the GeForce 256 is set to have a revolutionary impact upon game performance. Look for a review soon. ■

# S3 Savage 2000/+

■ S3 have a rather shabby reputation within the gaming industry: having been responsible for both the execrable Virge DX chipset, and the capable, if flawed, Savage3. Within weeks of the release of the Savage4 Pro Xtreme, S3 have begun to publicise their ground breaking Savage 2000 videocard. The Savage 2000, formerly known as the GX4, will be released in two different flavours. The standard 2000 series will be aimed at computer manufacturers, whilst the 2000+ version will be a retail product.

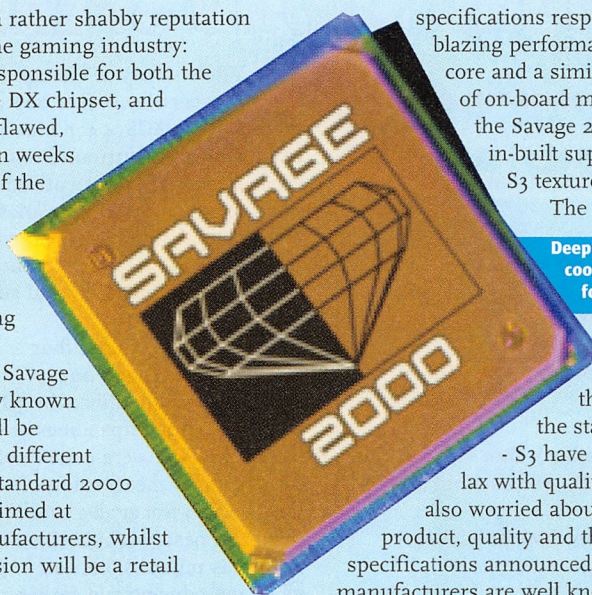
The Savage 2000 has a seriously impressive feature list. For starters, it comes with an on-chip T&L engine (much like the GeForce). S3 engineers have also claimed a mind-blowing 700 m/pixel fill rate. Whether or not this includes all the graphical frippery (shading etc) is soon to be established. The

specifications responsible for this blazing performance are a 200 MHz core and a similarly clocked 64MB of on-board memory. Naturally, the Savage 2000 will come with in-built support for proprietary S3 texture compression.

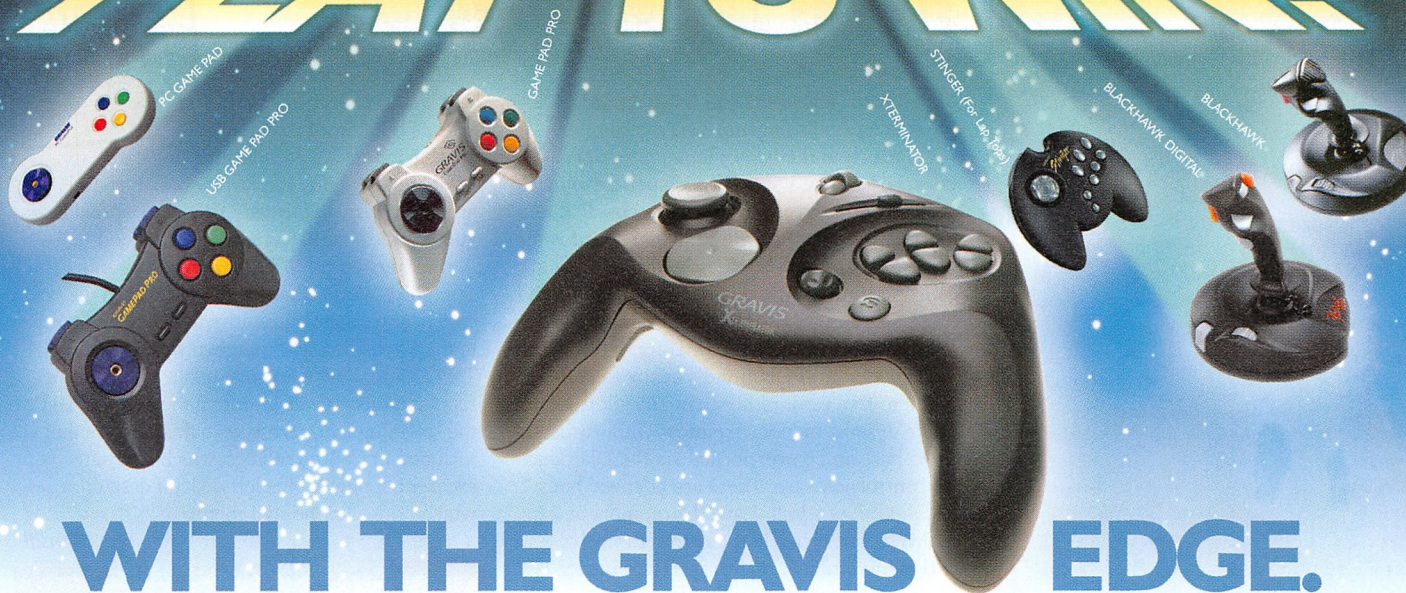
The main question

**Deeply erotic, sexy, hot, cool? It's a piece of silicon for pete's sake!**

mark hanging over the success of the Savage 2000 is the standard of its drivers - S3 have traditionally been lax with quality drivers. We are also worried about delivery of the product, quality and the validity of the specifications announced. Computer manufacturers are well known for over-hyping their product prior to release, as was the case with the original nVidia TNT. The transition to .18 micron manufacturing process, and the inherent problems of creating such a complex chip will pose new challenges for S3. Hopefully the Savage 2000 will re-establish S3 as a manufacturer of choice. ■



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www.gravis.com



# ALTEC LANSING ACS54 SURROUND SOUND SPEAKERS

RRP: \$249

Distributor: **Innovision (03 5831 8833)**

## ACS54 SPECIFICATIONS

### OVERALL

Total audio power: **40 watts**

THD: **<0.8% @ 1 watt, 1kHz**

Input sensitivity: **300 MV for full output**

Input impedance: **>10K ohms**

Frequency response: **8Hz - 18 kHz**

### SATELLITES

Speakers (per satellite): **One 75mm**

Audio power: **5 watts per channel (20 watts total)**

Frequency response: **250 Hz - 18kHz**

S/N Ratio: **>65 dB**

### SUBWOOFER

Speaker: **One 100mm long throw**

Audio power: **20 watts**

Frequency response: **38 Hz - 250 Hz**

While it may be enough for most prospective speaker buyers out there that the ACS54 combines a complete 5 piece surround sound speaker package with an affordable price tag, it's reassuring to know that Altec Lansing have ensured that there's more to this product than simply affordability and good looks.

The ACS54 includes four satellite speakers and one subwoofer unit to utilise the 3D surround sound capabilities of your sound card. We were most impressed by the absolutely meaty subwoofer provided in the package. Not at all a mock-together ply job, this black beauty is built like a rock and almost weighs as much as one - an important factor when reproducing and carrying bass frequencies. The higher frequencies are also handled well by the well-constructed satellite speakers.

Of course, you'll need a sound card that supports 3D positional audio (usually denoted by two speaker output jacks on the card itself) to take full advantage of the ACS54 speaker



package. However, don't fret if your sound card doesn't support this - the ACS54 will do rather nicely with standard surround sound (the rear two speakers acting as extra left and right channels), at least until you make the sound card upgrade.

Overall, an affordable surround sound speaker package without the trimmings.

*March Stepnik*

## DATA PROTECT

Distributor: **Butterfly Pacific**

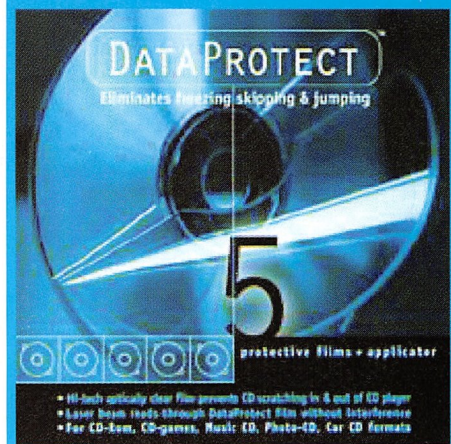
(03 9682-8844)

RRP: **\$9.95 (5 pack + applicator), \$14.95 (10 unit refill pack)**

We were initially skeptical as to whether or not the Dataprotect sheets would function as advertised. To our surprise, this thing actually works! Basically, the Dataprotect is a thin plastic film which is placed on the read-side of a CD to protect it against scratching and soiling.

The applicator included (essential a CD tray) holds the disc in while you carefully apply the film. The system has been designed so that any errors associated with applying the film are kept to a bare minimum.

Most importantly, we tested out Dataprotected disks on a small number of CD-ROM drives and found that other than a slight delay in recognising disc format, there was no problem in data reading and retrieval. Also works to protect your music CDs.



# DIAMOND VIPER V770 ULTRA 32MB

RRP: \$549

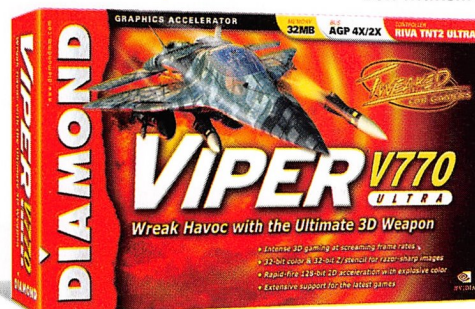
Distributor: **Diamond (02 9460 2355)**

Diamond's flagship TNT2 card offers much to the gamer looking for speed at a value price. The V770 Ultra dispenses with TV out and support for flat panel screens, features most gamers can do without when speed is the priority. Diamond ship their Ultra TNT2 at a core speed of 150MHz, with its 5.5 nanosecond RAM operating at 183MHz. These settings are relatively conservative for an Ultra, but this is indicative only of Diamond's desire to ship a problem-free card, rather than any shortcoming of the design. Indeed, like most Ultra cards, the V770 has can be overclocked via the Diamond In Control software. There are 5 "speed boost" settings, all of which leave the memory at 183MHz, but increase the core settings by 5MHz increments, up to 175MHz. Further increases in speed are possible. Using Powerstrip ([www.entech.com](http://www.entech.com)), our test V770 Ultra ran perfectly happily at a memory setting of 195MHz, however the core refused to play at any speed higher than 175MHz. The upper threshold will depend entirely on the particular card you end up with, but try not to think about that as you look at the many V770 boxes on the shelf and pick yours.

The performance is, as you would expect from an Ultra TNT2, impressive stuff. Among the possibilities this card offers is the ability to play DVD as fast and smooth as any dedicated DVD card - providing you've at least a PII 350 under the hood.

Full versions of Wild Metal Country and Superbike World Championship come in the box, which, to us, is little incentive to buy. Rather, look to the V770 Ultra as a marginally overclockable TNT2 Ultra, built with great quality. Diamond's reputation for drivers is among the best too, and the last thing that warms us to this card are the included In Control utilities, which really are excellent, if only for the left-click on desktop which brings up the start menu.

*Ben Mansill*





# GUILLEMOT RACE LEADER FORCE FEEDBACK STEERING WHEEL

RRP: \$259

Distributor: Ubisoft (02 9362 1414)

Guillemot have produced a force feedback steering wheel at a very reasonable price point, significantly below the extortionate prices of the competition. The Race Leader is a curious looking contraption, something akin to the steering wheel in Knight-Rider: the centre is a colossal silvery hub, with two spokes leading off to a decidedly uncomfortable grip. The wheel has the usual collection of buttons, with a cheap feeling d-pad and the obligatory F1-style gear selectors. The gear selection paddles however, are placed far too low for easy use. Another design cock-up was the table mounting system. The four suction cups are almost completely useless, and the included clamps fail to accommodate for a table with a lip. If you do manage to secure the wheel to your desk, you'll find that the protruding clamps constantly graze your knees during gameplay. The most prominent problem though, was the unit's flimsy construction - we spent the majority of race time paranoid that any sharp turn would tear the plastic wheel from its base. Similarly, when the unit vibrated, we were terrified that the wheel would literally disintegrate in our hands. The pedals are of similar build quality, with a tiny base and ill fitting pedals. On carpeted floor, the pedals have a tendency to slide away from you, making constant repositioning necessary.



In a bizarre twist, the designers chose to include a Starfleet badge on the wheel.

The force feedback effects varied from game to game, all the way from poor to mind numbingly bad. The Race Leader utilises a series of gears to produce the force feedback sensation, eschewing the superior, if more expensive, belt system of other products. The lightweight wheel and the weak motor make for a highly unsatisfying experience, and is not at all helped by the buggy driver software bundled with the wheel. In TOCA 2, the Guillemot wheel occasionally whirs into life, producing a few canned, unconvincing effects. Don't expect to feel the press of G-Force, or the elephantine rumble of a massive engine. The

intermittent jerks of the wheel have a hugely disruptive effect on racing, unlike many other wheels we've tested. The wheel produces annoying lateral movement that doesn't help the razor-like precision required in racing games. As a controller for non force-feedback games, the Race Leader is virtually unusable. There is almost no gradual resistance to movement, and very little tension.

If you're prepared to put up with sub-standard quality, poor performance and design cues stolen from 'Lost in Space', then cautiously check this contraption out!

Hugh Norton-Smith

# A-TREND HARMONY 6 5.1 CHANNEL SOUND CARD

RRP: \$119

Distributor: Innovision (03 5831 8833)

This card is one of the only sound cards around that offers support for the Dolby 5.1 channel digital output standard. A company called ForteMedia creates the actual chip powering this sound card. The FM801 as the chip is known is extremely powerful for such a small sized chip. It has advanced

features that you would normally have to pay through the nose to get. This new card from A-trend will allow gamers to experience the quality and realism of full 6 channel sound output. The only real question here is when games will begin to offer this support.

That said, games that use DirectSound or A3D powered games do get better sound on a 6 speaker system anyway, even though the game doesn't necessarily support Dolby digital. This card really has to be heard to be believed! The actual sound quality is extremely good especially when coming out of 6 speakers. Thus, the only real downfall with this card is having to upgrade your speaker system to get the full benefit - it might be beyond most gamer's budgets. Those gamers lucky enough to have a 5.1 channel capable amplifier (probably not too many!) should go out and grab

one of these cards right away. Even those that don't have such a high-tech speaker system should give the Harmony 6 a look. It is an extremely capable sound card that would make any gaming rig sound the way the games were designed to be heard.

Garry Wallis

## HARMONY 6 SPECIFICATIONS

Sound chip: ForteMedia 801

Voices: 64

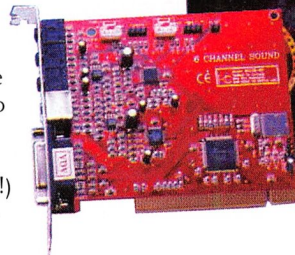
3D sound capable: DirectSound3D, A3D, Qsound

On board RAM: No, uses system RAM

Interface: PCI

Connections: Stereo Audio-out, 5.1 Channel 9-pin din, S/PDIF

Special features: Dolby 4-channel digital output and Dolby 5.1 channel digital output.



Quite what the bloody logo has to do with a sound card is anyone's guess.





# SETUP

## WRITE TO:

Setup  
PC PowerPlay  
PO BOX 634  
Strawberry Hills  
NSW 2016  
setup@pcpowerplay.next.com.au

When you write remember to include as much pertinent information as possible. Send your CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT and any associated \*.INI files for Windows that might tell me more about your problem. Give me as detailed an explanation as you can and be sure to include as much detail as possible about your PC. Feel free to email your questions or, if you want to snail mail, please remember to write clearly or better still print your letters. Please note that due to the volume of messages we receive, we cannot guarantee a response to your queries.

## TECH TIPS

### HANDLING EXTENSIONS

An alternative way to read unknown files or text files with the 'wrong' extension is:

Open Windows Explorer  
GoTo Windows/SendTo  
Right Click then choose New ShortCut  
Create a shortcut to the file you wish to use ie Notepad.exe  
OK

Now if you right-click on one of those files you can choose 'Send to Notepad' to read the file.

MrGronk

No, no! Don't pull me away from Everquest... pleeeeeease...

## SHUTDOWN SILLINESS

**Q** The only problem I have with my computer is that Windows 98 is too incompetent to shut down properly and just "hangs" most of the time. After countless hours tweaking this and that, I finally stumbled onto the cure. Here it is: after the hard drive loading times became unbearable, I decided to defragment my drive. Having a 6.4 GB drive I do not defragment it much, as it is a long and tiring process, even on my Pentium II 300! To my extreme amazement and joy, after the defragment, my PC now shuts down! PCs not shutting down is a common problem for me and my mates and I am glad I found a cure! Also, I have noticed that win 98 is slightly more stable now!

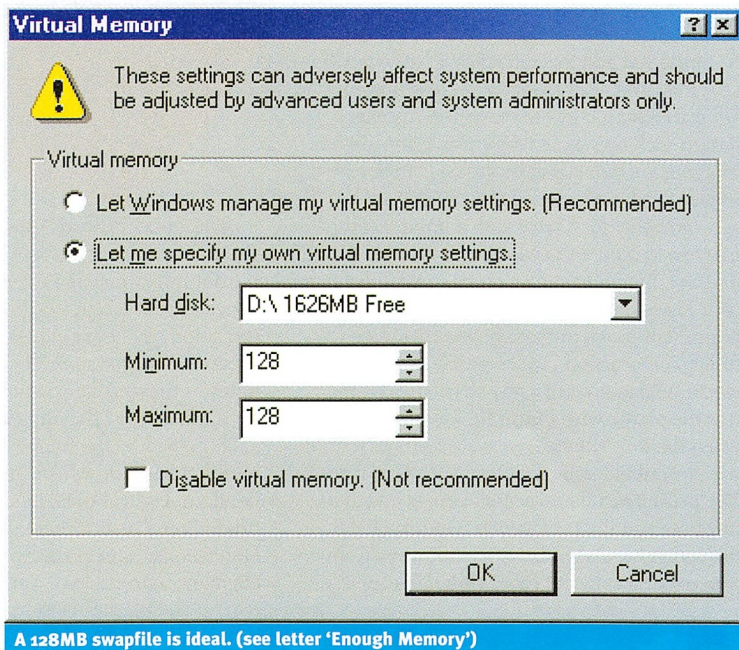
This may seem fine, but a few things are still nagging me, why did a defragment stop it from crashing at shutdown? And why would a "clean" drive make windows more stable? Why could I shut down on a win 95 installation when I have a 30% fragmented drive and in win 98 not be able to with only a 15% fragmented one?

Jarrad Mitchell

**A** Why defragging your drive allows Windows to shutdown properly is one of those galactic mysteries that we'll probably never know the answer to. It's probably so galactic and so mysterious that I doubt even Microsoft knows what's going on inside its own operating system.

A defragged drive, however, doesn't so much help stability but more performance. If the drive heads need to do less work, data will be transferred quicker and your system will seem slightly faster, and less likely to pause during intense disk operations.

Despite the design of the FAT filesystem that DOS and Windows uses, in that they become fragmented and slowly lose performance, it's still the fastest file system out there. More advanced file systems like NT's NTFS, OS/2's HPFS or the Linux Ext2



file system are all designed to be reliable - they rarely suffer fragmentation. But as a result, they're slower in operation. However, given the speed of machines and drives these days, this difference is barely noticeable (although NTFS is a slow filesystem regard less).

When Windows 2000 arrives you'll have the choice of using FAT32 or NTFS. If you're want the absolute best performance for games, choose FAT, otherwise take advantage of NTFS and you won't need to defrag again.

## ENOUGH MEMORY?

**Q** I have a PII400 computer running Windows 98 SE and 256MB SDRAM. My question is do I still need a swap file (virtual memory)? I currently use a 128MB permanent swap file hoping to get maximum performance for my games.

Luke Baines

**A** Strangely enough, you do need a swapfile. Windows stores some information in the swapfile, no matter how much RAM you have.

However, given that you've got 256MB you'll probably find it's rarely used. Keep it at 128MB, it's the magic number for swapfiles.

## KEYS TO OVERCLOCKING

**Q** I've got a P3-450 MHz cpu with a Abit BX6-R2 M/B and a TNT2 video card. Recently I have been overclocking the processor by pushing up the FSB. However when trying an FSB of 124MHz @ 557MHz, the computer crashes during the 6 pixel polygon (individual) test, half way into the 3DMark 99 benchtest.

Is the failure to pass a complete 3DMark 99 test a result of the accumulation of heat in the processor?

Is the CPU reaching its limit in speed or two the RAM is producing some kind of error at that speed. The RAM is 6ns CAS3 type. Could this be the cause of errors at this FSB as any bus speed below 124 works fine? Finally would CAS2 RAM make the 557MHz speed a viable option if I was to upgrade?



# LETTER OF THE MONTH

## WHAT'S IP?

**Q** I've been wondering about this for a while and I was wondering, how can you tell from an IP address where something is? Because whenever I log onto a "supposedly" low ping server it turns out to be a yankee one and I get an extremely high ping. Is the IP address like a postcode or something or is it just random numbers?

**Steve Forrester**

**A** Well, yes, it is like a postcode (random numbers? What are you nuts? -Ed). Every single machine on the Internet, every last one, even your PC when you dial into your ISP, has a unique IP. How information travels is a different story.

Going with the postcode idea, different countries and zones within countries have a unique IP. Many sites (but not all) in Australia, for example, start with the numbers 203, so you can always tell a site or server is in Australia if it starts with this number.

You can, however, get a more accurate idea of where a machine is by doing the following: next time you're on the Web open up a DOS box and type: `tracert ftp.cdrom.com`. This performs what's known as a traceroute and will trace the path information flows between your PC and the destination, in this case the world's largest FTP archive at

`ftp.cdrom.com`. You'll see that packets are sent through a number of 'hops', these are routers that filter and pass information between each other all over the world. For `ftp.cdrom.com` you'll see the immediate server names of your ISP followed by the hops in between to `ftp.cdrom.com`. You'll notice your data passes through a few routers in San Francisco at one stage. You can use `tracert` to determine the location of any machine in the world.

This is how I determined the Everquest server I wanted to play on. For security and to stop people wasting bandwidth pinging the Everquest servers, Verant

### No, IP addresses aren't random...

placed the servers behind firewalls. This means you can't ping them to find which would be the fastest server. Not a problem if you're in the US where response times are low, but over here ever millisecond counts. Verant have divided their servers into three server farms located in the US, and logically one of these would have to be closer to us than the other two. Although you can't ping the machines, you can

traceroute them, and traceroute lists both number of hops and the response time between hops. As a result I found the closest server farm to Australia and chose a server (Cazic-Thule) to play on. This is all irrelevant now, however, because I'm playing on the RaceWar servers! Oh no, I'm talking about Everquest again! You know, I actually 'hail' my work mates now!

## TweakMan

**A** Hey Tweakman, you're talking to someone who recently upgraded to a PIII 450 and is currently running it overclocked at 558MHz. Ohh yeah, it's smoooooth.

Firstly if you're using the original heatsink/fan that came with the PIII then yes you're being heat limited. I managed to run at 524MHz on the Intel heatsink/fan combo but 558MHz was getting just too hot. It was working, but not reliably. The solution is to rip off that crappy Intel heatsink and replace it with a real one. For this I purchased a PIII heatsink and fan combo from the states, which only took a week to arrive. There aren't too many PIII coolers around at the moment, but check out some of the heatsink comparisons at [www.bxboards.com](http://www.bxboards.com). I've been running at 558MHz for over a month and even when I've got the heater in my room on full ball I haven't encountered a problem. Getting an extra 110MHz of PIII power is very good indeed!

Why does the heatsink make such a difference? Without going too far into the science of it all there are two key elements of a heatsink that make it successful - heat dissipation and heat conductivity. The former can be defined by the size and area of the heatsink as well as the fans that circulate air around it. Bigger and more is better. This, however, is a moot point if the heatsink can't properly conduct heat from the CPU

core. This is the reason that good heatsinks work so well as they excel at sucking heat from the CPU core, ensuring optimum heat transference. This is evidenced by the PII heatsink and fan combo I originally tied (quite literally, with zip-tags) to my PIII before I purchased the cooler from the states. Even with thermal grease I couldn't overclock past 504MHz without crashing. It wasn't the heatsink and fan that was the problem, it just wasn't sucking the heat out of the CPU well enough.

Lastly, as you mentioned, RAM is important. CAS3 RAM may work at 124MHz but remember it's only rated for 100MHz. Given RAM is more expensive than the PIII cooler perhaps buy the cooler first and if you find you're not running stable at 124MHz then purchase CAS2 RAM to replace your CAS3.

Take note that removing the original PIII heatsink voids your warranty and, because it's a tricky affair, may damage your CPU. You do this at your own risk. Surf to [www.bxboards.com](http://www.bxboards.com) for some guides on removing it. If you want to ensure absolute maximum cooling potential remove the backplate too as this traps heat in the cartridge. This is what I did, and I literally just took to it with some wire cutters and cut out everything but the supporting stands to keep the heatsink attached. It's a little rough around the edges, but I've been running at 558MHz ever since.

## MULTILINKING

**Q** I just got a new 56k modem, but I was told that a phone line can only support 33k so how can you have a 56k modem? And my friend had told me you can also have two modems linked together to give you a faster connection, is this true?

**Allan Dalton**

Linking multiple lines is an easy way to achieve higher bandwidth. (see letter 'Multilinking')



TECH  
TIPSSYSTEM FILE  
CHECKER

I don't know if you are aware of this program. I found it in my windows\system directory in Win98.

It's called **System File Checker (sfc.exe)**. What it does is checks the integrity of your system files. If it finds a corrupt file, it copies the file from the Win98 CD to restore it. It saved me from having to re-install Windows. I don't know why Microsoft don't advertise this program because it's a life saver.

Michael Tarascio

**A** This was covered a while ago, but I'll touch on it briefly here. It's true, our phone system can only handle around 33.6k. So where does 56k come into it? When you call 56k you're dialling into a digital service, and this requires special equipment on the receiving end. This is why if you want to hook up two 56k modems direct, all you're going to get is 33.6k. Also take note that even connecting to a 56k service you can only ever upload at 33.6k.

As for linking modems it's both possible and easy. There are a number of different standards for line bundling, multilinking and serial line load balancing as it's otherwise known. Windows supports multilinking and so do a few ISPs around Australia. All you need is two phone lines, two modems and the right ISP. It's great stuff too, I use it every now and then for big downloads and transfer at a smooth 10k a second.

## WHAT'S WITH OEM?

**Q** I am after your thoughts - general or specific - on the issue of OEM vs Retail.

I can get an OEM Voodoo3 2000 for \$200 (Australian), but the cheapest I can find a Retail is for \$250! I don't care for the coloured box or the game demos, but I do care about the quality of the actual card, its overclockability, and its wear and tear value.

## “If you want to mount a fan inside your case, do so wherever it fits!”

Is there a material difference in the Retail and OEM parts? Do they have different RAM, RAM speeds, etc? Do they have different specifications? Will they overclock to the same levels, and is there a difference in heat production?

Will an OEM card last as long (overclocked and non-overclocked) as a Retail? What about the warranty?

I have heard that they (STB/3dfx) take the best parts for retail and use the rest for OEM. Is this true? There must be a reason for the \$50 (Australian) price difference!

Nathan Hobbs

**A** Yes, there is. It's the coloured box and demos, that's what you pay for! There is no difference between OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) products and the retail versions apart from the box and bundled stuff. Why pay for all that marketing trash? Just buy the hardware OEM, plug it in, download latest drivers from the Web and you're away.

MOTHERBOARD  
MAYHEM

**Q** Could you please shed some light on the world of

motherboards? It's confusing enough with all the different kinds of chips available today, but it's a nightmare when you have to then match these chips up to the right motherboards. Slot 1, Socket 7, Slot A, BX, LX and more - which chip fits in which motherboard

type, which is the best for future expansion, and which has the features?

Also, I have to ask: how on Earth do you go about installing additional cooling fans in your system? How do you secure it in a particular position to blow air onto the CPU for example? Surely you don't clip it to the nearest PCI board?

Adam Britton

**A** Well, yeah, I do. Ok, not the nearest PCI card but I do have an old PII Intel fan zip-tagged to the chassis to blow more air over the PIII. If you want to mount a fan inside your case, do so wherever it fits!

For power you have two options — some motherboards, especially newer ones, come with at least two

or three fan power supplies that can also measure the RPM of the fans. You'll find one the CPU fan can attach to, another for the case fan (if your case doesn't have a front fan, then get one!) and sometimes a third for the power supply. Given that power packs come with their own fan, this is normally spare. So guess what I connect my extra fan up to?

If this isn't an option all you need to do is buy a few spare “mylex” power cables (or power splitters) from a computer shop and then do a bit of cut'n'paste with the wires. Most small fans come with small connectors that aren't going to fit in the mylex plug, so you just cut and twist the wires together and tape them up to ensure they don't contact with anything else. The fun part, however, is matching up the correct wires from the mylex cable to the wires from the fan. It should be red to black and vise versa, but it isn't always the case. Whatever you do don't leave any bare wires in the machine and make sure you always work with the wires when the powerplug is out of your PC (yep, pull it out of the power pack). If you're not confident playing around with wires, then don't.

As for motherboards, I'm not going to enter into that discussion! Check out [www.bxboards.com](http://www.bxboards.com) for some helpful information, it helped guide my new motherboard purchase when I got the PIII 450 (my old motherboard for the PII wasn't the best for overclocking).

## GET OVER IT

**Q** Which would be the bottle neck in a PIII 450 and TNT2 (standard) system? The video card or the CPU?

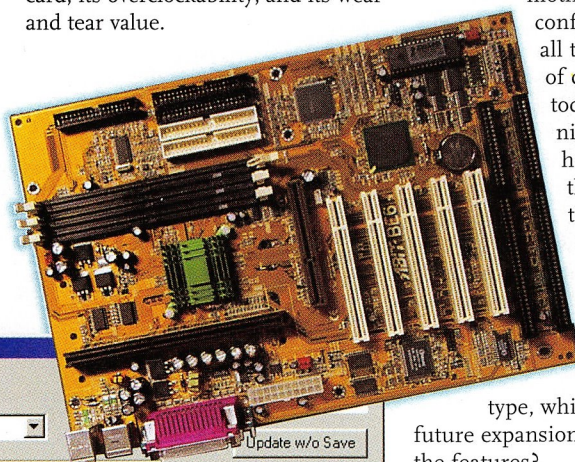
I've noticed that overclocking the video card achieves higher fps in benchmark utilities like 3DMark 99 than does overclocking the CPU.

Stan

**A** It depends on what you're running. Some games demand a lot of the CPU while others more of the video card. Ultimately, both are important and there's no point upgrading one too far past the other otherwise you create a bottleneck. The greatest bottleneck when it comes to deciding what part or parts to upgrade is your wallet!

And don't be worrying about bottlenecks - you've got a PIII 450 TNT2 system - that's more than most PCPP readers have!

Ashton Mills



System Health Monitor R2.30

System Health Monitor R2.30

Polling Interval: 4 Seconds

Temperature

CPU Over-Heat Temperature: 50 Celsius

CPU Hysteresis Temperature: 40 Fahrenheit

CPU Temperature: 29

Voltage (V)

	High Limit:	Low Limit:	Current Voltage:
3.3V Values	3.46	3.13	3.37
12V Values	12.60	11.40	11.82
5V Values	5.25	4.75	5.08
VCore Values	4.00	1.00	2.05

Fan (RPM)

	Low Limit:	Current Speed:
CPU Fan	2000	0
System Fan	2000	2086

Alarm when

- ☒ CPU Over Heat
- ☐ 3.3V Abnormal
- ☐ 12V Abnormal
- ☐ 5V Abnormal
- ☒ VCore Abnormal
- ☐ CPU Fan Abnormal
- ☐ System Fan Abnormal

Buttons: Update w/o Save, Update and Save, User Setting, Default Setting, Quit, Hide

Modern motherboards come with monitoring software that can report CPU temperature and fan speeds. (see letter 'Motherboard Mayhem')





# **HYPER** »

**DARE TO  
LOOK INSIDE?**

**OUR EXCLUSIVE REVIEW OF  
SOUL CALIBUR ON DREAMCAST  
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# NGN

## NET GAME NEWS

WELCOME TO THE CYBER PLAYGROUND

# SYSTEM SHOCK 2

### www.shock2.com

You already know what we think of this game. If not, stop everything and turn to page 64 for the full PowerPlay review.

Now, we reported earlier that System Shock 2 would include multiplayer straight out of the box at release. Déjà vu anyone? Just as Looking Glass did with Thief: The Dark Project, Looking Glass (co-developers of Sys Shock 2) have also shipped System Shock 2 with the promised multiplayer feature conspicuously absent. Citing balance issues as a mitigating factor, Irrational Games (the developers) claim that shipping the game with a ready-to-go multiplayer component could have delayed the release further - even though single player was complete.

Still, we wait with bated breath for what seems a most promising style of multiplayer. Part first-person shooter and all RPG, System Shock 2 multiplayer will require the concerted effort of all players to solve the game's many puzzles.

At time of press, the multiplayer patch was supposedly "only a few days away". Suspiciously, that was the same message Looking Glass were giving out soon after Thief's release. Thief's multiplayer patch was cancelled and moved







instead to the upcoming sequel. Apparently, we can rest assured that System Shock 2's multiplayer patch will be released in the very near future.

Here's an excerpt from the official FAQ at the System Shock 2 web site.

**Q: What is the status of the multiplayer?**

A: Currently we are working on a patch which will add multiplayer support to System Shock 2.

**Q: What kind of multiplayer will be supported?**

A: The patch will enable co-operative multiplayer only. Up to 4 players will be supported.

**Q: What protocols are supported?**

A: IP (as in TCP/IP) through Microsoft DirectPlay.

**Q: Is the multiplayer game the same as the single player game?**

A: Essentially yes, though the difficulty is increased slightly. Multiplayer games are both easier (because more people are involved) and harder (because you must share resources) than single player games.

**Q: Can you damage other players?**

A: Yes, though Shock 2 multiplayer isn't intended for death-matching.

**Q: How are resources shared?**

A: Cyber-upgrade modules are replicated for all players. Other resources are gathered by individuals but can be transferred from one player to another.

**Q: Is Shock 2 Roger Wilco compatible?**

A: Yes

Expect a full review of System Shock 2 multiplayer in a coming edition of Net Game News, providing of course, the patch is released!

## TOP5 ONLINE GAMES

1. Tiberian Sun
2. Quake 3 Arena Test
3. Ultima Online
4. Half-life
5. Descent 3

This month's top spot comes as no surprise. Tiberian Sun is out, and gamers are going crazy. It was hard to expect any less. Quake 3 Arena is holding in there, and as we clock up the hours on the game, the final release date creeps ominously closer. It's not long now! New entry this month is Descent 3, which reawakened a legion of Descent multiplayer fans and



brought them out to play.

To cast your vote for the Top 5 Multiplayer Games every month, email [ngn@pcpowerplay.next.com.au](mailto:ngn@pcpowerplay.next.com.au) with your favourite online game.

## QUICK POLL

In #40 we asked "Would you prefer to subscribe to an online gaming service like Wireplay or Multiplay, or do you prefer to rely on the Internet and free services like Gamespy or Boneyards to play online?"

Our responses were straight down the middle. Many proclaimed the wonderful benefits of subscription-based providers - the great sense of community and the high speed connections (not to mention all the cool prizes). Fans of free services cited cost (zip) and ease of use as primary reasons for sticking with free ware. A point often raised was that no matter which time of the day, you always had an opponent to play on a free game service provider (like Bnet, for example).

One thing was clear though. It seemed most online gaming subscribers, having the best of both worlds, preferred to use their paid service over the free programs out there.

"I think programs like Gamespy are the way to go. They are produced by gamers, for gamers. You don't have to put up with banners and ads, and they are a breeze to use. I wouldn't trade my Gamespy 2.13 for any other multiplayer service.

I just hope the corporate chunk that bought half of the company don't try to change an almost faultless product."

AJ

"Presently, I play most of my games via the 'free' services, though I have tried out some of the subscription services like Multiplay.

I have found that since playing Quake with Multiplay, that it is a great way for new players to find a community feel as opposed to the cold and unfriendly 'join the game with the lowest ping' game that exists when using other methods such as GameSpy.

Also, quite often games on the free services are unplayable due to high ping times and the load of playing via the U.S."

M. Reynolds

### C&C Tiberian Sun

As they say, single player is but practice for multiplay. While gamers decide upon the single player experience of Tiberian Sun, multiplayer fanatics are taking to the game in droves, already forming a huge community of ready and willing multiplayer opponents. However, is it all it was cracked up to be? NGN, and Australia's gamers want to know what you think. Are you Ecstatic? Disappointed? Miffed?

This month we ask: "Tiberian Sun multiplayer - do you love it or loathe it?"

Email your responses to [ngn@pcpowerplay.next.com.au](mailto:ngn@pcpowerplay.next.com.au). Results to be published in #44.

## PATCH NEWS

What did ya think? That a game's release means its finished? No siree. It's only the beginning of a long love affair with game patches. (All files on CD)

### Half-Life v1.0.13

- The mod browser now supports .zip file decompression.
- Added a new feature for server operators called 'TF Stats', which takes server log files and creates a web page with the results of your TFC match. TF Stats also gives awards for various feats accomplished during the game, like the "Swiss Cheese" award for the person with the most kills using the assault cannon, and the "Kamikaze" award for the player who dies the most times by his/her own hand. (Refer to [\half-life\tfc\manual\TFStats.html](#) for instructions).
- The server now allows banning by WON uniqueid. (Refer to [TFCServer.htm](#) located in your [\half-life\tfc\manual](#) folder.)
- We've updated the TFC manual with information about running a TFC server.

### Fixes:

- Fixed the problem where too many packets were being sent at sign-on (this was causing problems for cable modem users).
- Team 4 can now score on 4-player TFC maps.
- Fixed the Soldier's nail grenades in TFC.
- Demo Playback is fixed.
- Userinfo overrun is fixed.
- Spies feigning death in doorways will no longer drop all clients on server.
- Grenades will no longer detonate if you change teams.
- The dedicated server no longer requires hw.dll for authentication.
- The dedicated server will heartbeat with +map in the command line.

### Kingpin v1.2

#### Fixes/Changes:

- New "g\_mapcycle\_file" variable, to set the cycle list to something other than "maps.lst" or "teammaps.lst"
- Added "kickban" command to server (works same as "kick <id>" but also adds the ip to the filter list)
- Download skins option in Player Setup menu

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Multi-Player Online  
Role Playing Game

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\* 100 Players \* 300 NPCs \*  
200 Monsters \* Spells

for Windows95/98/NT  
32 bit - Direct X

Server located here in Australia  
for fastest low lag play



# NGN RPG News

By Lindsey "Australis Dragon" Smith

## PATCH NEWS

► added "time" command to console  
 • fixed server exploit  
 • alterations to voting system  
 • client model server crash with dm\_location\_damage enabled  
 • Invisible player models for unknown female skins  
 • Chasescam observer mode  
 • New "Push Download" tech for faster file transfers  
 • Make download system backwards compatible with old servers AND old clients  
 • Server's send "deposited" to GameSpy via "deaths" field  
 • Disable CD check when enabling CD music in options  
 • Add debug info to "FS\_Read: o bytes read" error  
 • Fix scoreboard for realmode (show kills and net score)  
 • In Gangbang teampay, frags go to the wrong team  
 • Skins not found, try and keep model, change skins back to 001 001 001 (since this is a safe set for all models)  
 • BAN voting system to boot trouble makers  
 • Subtract a frag for dying in "real mode". Subtract 2 for suiciding.  
 • Weapons reload after firing, if reload is pressed when clip is full  
 • Fixed some crashes  
 • Downloadable skins/models  
 • spectator mode exploit  
 • Shooting Flamethrower, switch weapons, flame stays  
 • LINUX: crashes during fighting with sewer guy with guns  
 • unlimited ammo in single player (DF\_INFINITE\_AMMO)  
 • last player killed when reaching fraglimit gets overflowed (made scoreboard message unreliable)  
 • skin: "male thug/sku sup sup" causes sewer skin in teampay  
 • Player ID always RED  
 • old chat style option  
 • shotgun doesn't always change when out of ammo  
 • real-mode option in start server menu

### Sin V1.06

Version 1.06 includes:

- New Map "Spool". Spool is a 2-5 player deathmatch map created by Zor.
- 3DNOW! code bugs/crashes have been fixed
- Savegames have been fixed
- A deathmatch-only "auto switch weapons" flag has been added. Turning this flag off will make it so that players don't automatically switch weapons when running over a new gun.
- there is now a new messagemode for talking, messagemode3. This mode can also be accessed from typing, "say\_talk".
- say\_talk [pitch] text pitch - is optional, with 1 being normal, 2 being twice as high as normal and 0.5 being half normal.
- text - What ever you type will be phonetically translated and synthesized.

## ShadowBane

<http://www.shadowbane.com>

First up, Shadowbane. Shadowbane is being developed by Wolf Pack Studios, out of Austin Texas. It looks to be an ambitious massively multiplayer role-playing game (MMRPG), designed around Player vs. Player combat. This is quite a break from the norm, as Everquest and Asheron's Call, as well as Ultima Online, distance themselves from Player vs. Player combat. PvP combat is what the people want, if the popularity of the Race War servers on EQ and the Siege Perilous shard on UO is any indication. Both shards were swamped the day of their opening, so we predict that an ORPG that focuses predominantly on PvP is going to do very well amongst the more visceral role players out there.

Shadowbane also differs from the other games with its dark and gothic design. From their slick web site, to the interviews with producers, it all reeks of darkness. Which is just the way we like it.

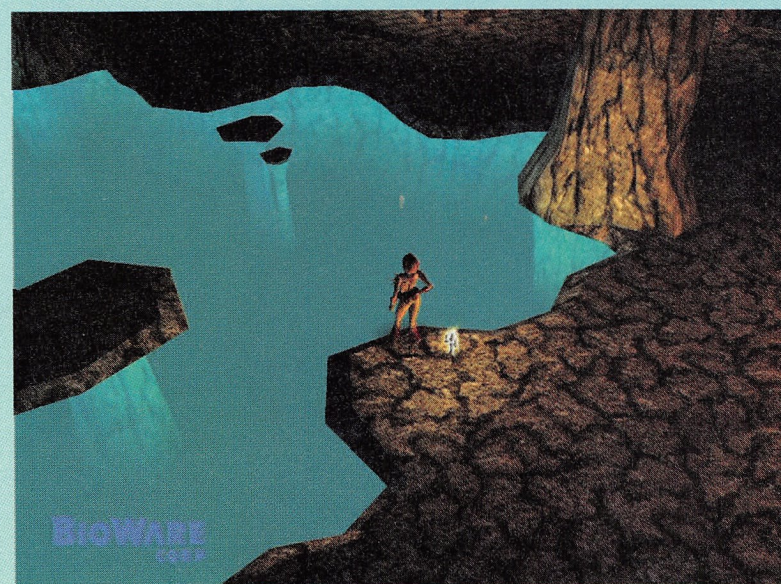
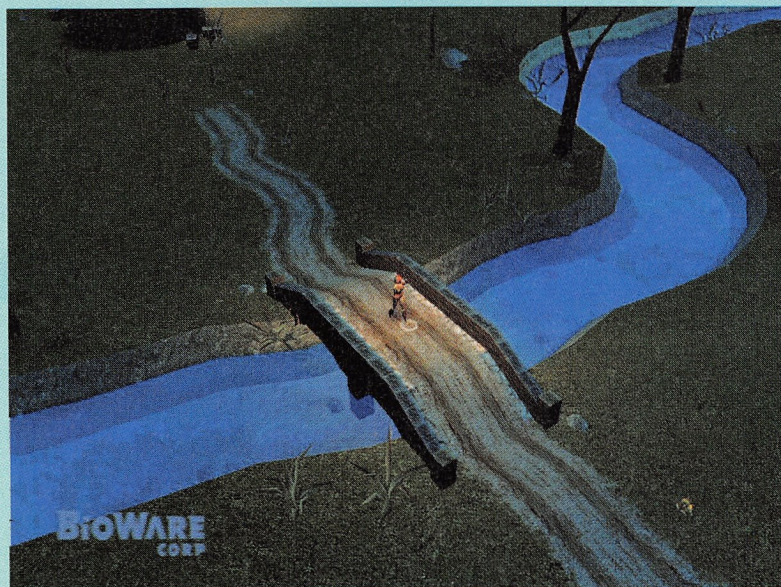
The world itself is also much more interactive than in other ORPGs. A full climate will be operational in Shadowbane, with various environmental effects actually affecting game play. This means that if you're caught in a blizzard, you are most likely going to die unless you find shelter. Environmental effects like this are a first in ORPGs, and along with the PvP aspect, look to make Shadowbane an outstanding game!

## NeverWinter Nights

<http://www.neverwinternights.com>

Where Shadowbane focuses on the PvP aspects of a game, Neverwinter Nights (NwN) bases itself on the pen and paper aspect of role-playing games. Developed by BioWare, the same people who made Baldur's Gate, NwN looks set to continue the same high level of role-playing quality.

The main difference of NwN to other RPGs is that it is ultra-reliant on the D&D rule set. Groups of players get together, play through a plot or story, and are controlled by a Player Dungeon Master. The dungeon master is the leader of the game, and controls all features of the group, including the Player Killing toggle, the ability to "possess" NPCs and Monsters, and generally customise the game. NwN is a very group orientated game, with group combat and exploration being the focus



No confirmation yet as to whether NwN has a 'Skinny Dipping' skill.

push in the game.

Another interesting feature of NwN is the ability to import a primary character from Baldur's Gate. It's the small things like this, as well as the advanced features offered to the Dungeon Master that should make Neverwinter Nights one very cool ORPG.

## The Awakening Project

<http://www.dtcomputers.com/awaken/>

The Awakening Project's (AP) claim to fame is most certainly going to be the world in which it is played. Designed from the start to be a dynamic and fluid online world, AP is looking white-hot indeed.

Various features look set to make AP a much different affair than most other

ORPGs. Nothing will be static in the AP world. Everything will be breakable, and "touchable". NPC AI will be developed to "care" for the world, and fill the holes that are present in most games. The spell and battle system will be almost limitless, meaning an almost infinite combination of spells and battle tactics may be available. There will be hundreds of items for players to gather, as well as hundreds of types of monsters to hunt. Some of the monsters will require huge parties of adventurers to defeat them too, stressing the importance of multiplayer aspect of the adventure.

It does remain to be seen whether all of this can actually be pulled off. The AP development team is making very wild claims, but if they CAN match them, AP is going to be one hell of a game.



Tom Clancy's  
**RAINBOW SIX**  
**ROGUE SPEAR™**

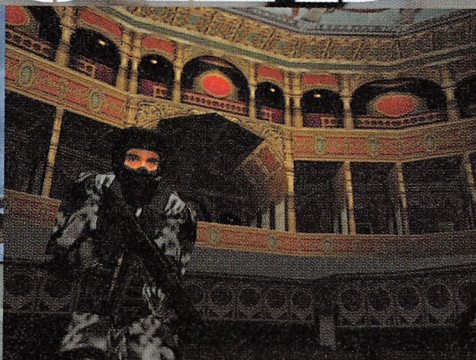


# MISSED ME?

Team Rainbow is back in full force. *Rogue Spear*, the sequel to PC Gamer's 1998 Action Game of the Year, immerses you even deeper in the explosive action of an elite multinational strike force.

*Rogue Spear* feels so real, you'll be yelling 'Tango Down' in your sleep for weeks. And the multiplayer action is to die for. Remember, when stalking the enemy: Walk softly but strike like a thunderbolt. You only have one shot to save the world.

- NEW REPLAY FEATURE
- NEW MISSION EDITOR
- FULL SNIPER SUPPORT
- EIGHTEEN NEW MISSIONS
- JOYSTICK SUPPORT
- TERRORISTS MORE REALISTIC AND LETHAL THAN EVER



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PETT 992346



# NGN Action News

By Elih Brading

## PATCH NEWS

### Dungeon Keeper 2

#### Update 1.50

THIS UPDATE WILL AFFECT YOUR SAVED GAMES.

Installing this update will mean that the Uninstall function will not clear out all DK2 files. After using the Uninstall option, you can safely delete the remaining DK2 files manually.

Your saved games ought to be safe, but you might want to back them up to be safe. They're stored in the Data\Save directory. When loading an old save game, you will start on the beginning of that level. Gameplay tweaks and additions in this Update

- 1024x768 resolution supported.
- Added 'No Mans Land' map. 2 player. Multiplayer and Skirmish.
- Added 'Circlet' map. 3 Player. Multiplayer and Skirmish.
- Added 'Patrol' map. 4 player. Multiplayer and Skirmish.
- Added 'Pressure' map. 3 player. Skirmish only.
- Added 'Torment' My Pet Dungeon level.
- Added 'Olympia' map. 4 player. Multiplayer and Skirmish. Also in Bonus Pack 1.
- Added a bunch more Temple Recipes.
- Added a flower icon to the Hero Alarm Trap.
- Added a multi-line chat message window to MP.
- Added a multiplayer option that makes reinforced walls impenetrable to enemy Imps.
- Added a new cheat for gaining mana.
- Added a warning box if player is timing out in multiplayer lobby.
- Added a warning for when all players in MP don't have the map chosen.
- Added A3D audio support.
- Added clearer alliance notification in the Allies window in MP.
- Added functionality in MP to let you chat once you have died.
- Added functionality that lets you play on in Single Player with the GUI available.
- Added notification of player's defeats in MP.
- Added the ability to have an allied end in multiplayer.
- Added the ability to wander the realm as a lost soul once after a multiplayer defeat.
- Added Torture flower icon.
- Added Total Evil Rating calculations and names.
- Adjusted Freeze Trap mana costs.
- All players can now see a thumbnail pic of the level in the MP lobby.
- Alliance information can now be heard by all players.
- Ally window in MP now shows who is allied to whom.
- Altered terrain slightly in Hopping.
- Altered the amount of damage Boulder now takes when hitting a creature.
- Altered the Knight's melee

## Collective Circuitry

QuakeCon was home to many surprises, one of those being the announcement that 30,000 collector copies of Quake 3 Arena will be produced. These limited edition items are for people who pre-order the game, or are reserved for special types among the Quake community. They feature an embossed, metallic design similar to that seen among computer circuitry. The image shown is a prototype, and the final enclosing will feature a much more defined exterior pattern.

While on the topic of Q3A versions, Carmack has announced the possibility of releasing a shareware OEM version of Q3A, bundled with hardware items (specifically graphics cards). The OEM release is likely to contain a few extra maps, but won't be available until the full shelf-release of Quake3:Arena.

## Quakecon Conclusion

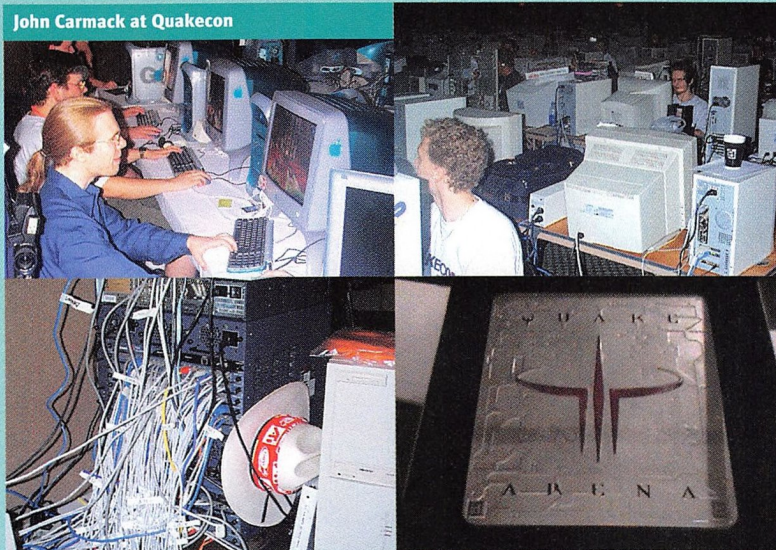
While no-one from PC Powerplay actually got to attend, Quakecon '99 has been toted the most successful Quake Multiplayer event ever staged. Over 1000 attendees, 10,000 feet of network cable and hubs as high as your head, the three day event was all about pure, hardcore, unadulterated multiplayer gaming. As if two gaming tournaments weren't enough to keep people occupied, the likes of Paul Steed, Paul Jaquays and the man himself, John Carmack, held lectures on the main stage while hundreds of gamers stood in awe as to what was id software.

Crt, the infamous coder behind classic mods such as Rocket Arena and Rocket Arenaz took out the press tournament, earning himself a Q3A leather jacket and a G3 Flatscreened Power Macintosh, while the top five from the public tournament took home spanking new Athlon computers and a horde of other prizes from event sponsors.

The event wasn't all about professionalism and competition though - humour ran rampant that weekend with people getting up to devilish tactics like creating 100-player stacks and a "crash-the-server" session where over 120 people connected to the main server on Q3TEST2. Carnage would be the best way to describe it.

With the new millennium fast approaching, expectations for Quakecon 2000 are already quite high. And there's just enough time to start saving those pennies for the airfare...

John Carmack at Quakecon



## MOD OF THE MONTH HALF-LIFE FIREARMS

Although still under heavy development, the Firearms mod for Half-Life looks set to be a leading contender for the "coolest weaponry" class: including over twenty-five different weapons, ten single player levels, deathmatch and teamplay orientated maps, brand-spanking new player models and skins, as well as a revolutionary menu system used to operate the various classes that will be on offer.

The single player perspective occurs through the role of Ezekiel Sawyer, the owner and operator of a privately run security company: basically, one mean dude. Before entering the game (single, multi or team games), you will be faced with a menu where you'll be able to choose your rig: including armour, ammunition, weaponry and other objects. The choices aren't unlimited however, as players are constrained to a certain amount of credits to purchase these supplies.

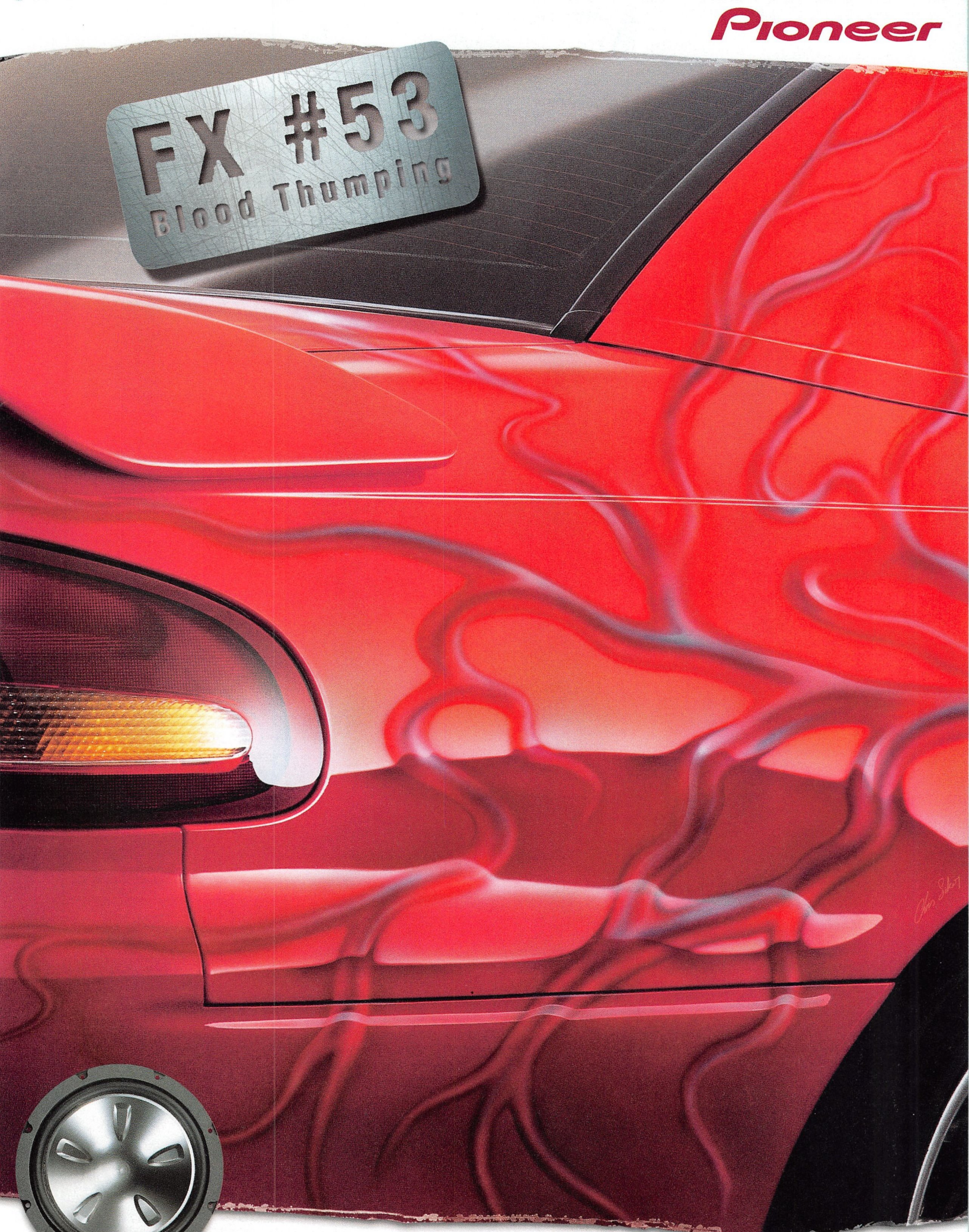
Firearms follows in the trail of games such as Goldeneye 007 by including realistic weaponry and real-life situations and environments. The array of diversity is mesmerising, with four different hand-grenade models and a horde of hand guns, rifles and machineguns - Firearms is sure to satisfy the hardcore combat fan.



Firearms? They look like wimpy knives to us...



Pioneer



Pioneer 10 and 12 inch Bass Bullet subwoofers.

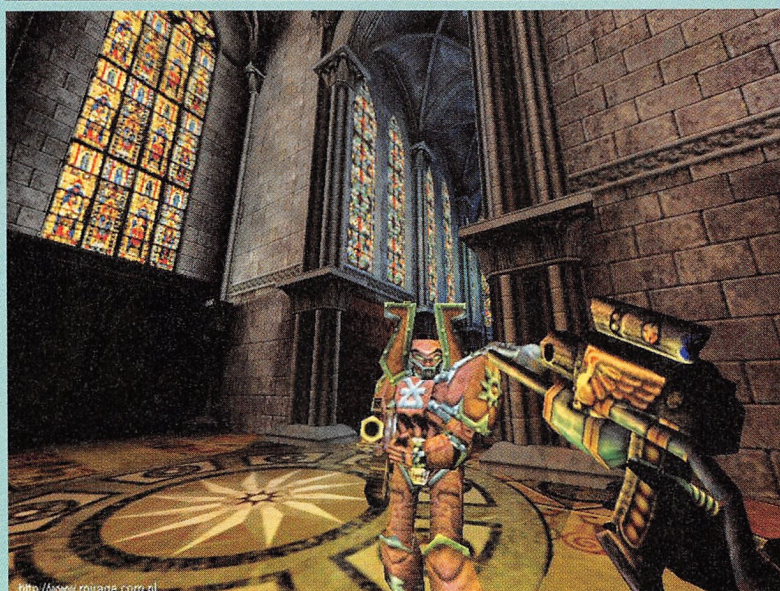


# NGN Action News

## PATCH NEWS

► sounds.

- Attacking sleeping creatures in first person now wakes them up.
- Boulders now take damage when slapped.
- Campaign progress now not saved with MPD or Skirmish.
- Certain creatures now use the Temple when idle.
- Creatures show how much mana they are generating from prayer.
- Dark Elves now eat and sleep if they need to when patrolling.
- De-activated game functions when in chat e.g. Zoom/Rotate.
- Disallow Full-screen map while game is paused.
- Each Mana Vault now provides an increase to the maximum amount of Mana.
- Efficiency tooltips now rounded up.
- Ensured that creatures cannot get stuck in doors which are opening or closing.
- Ensured that creatures killed in the Torture Chamber contribute to debriefing stats.
- Ensured that Imps only drag back unconscious bodies when there is one spare floor tile.
- Creatures will no longer be targetted in First Person mode.
- Game settings now saved between games.
- Given creatures the ability to cast Heal / Armour / Invisibility on themselves, if they have that spell.
- Hand now taken out of possession spell mode when coming out of possession.
- 'Heal' Creature Spells now slightly more powerful.
- Hero Lair texture is now easier on the eyes.
- Host quitting out of lobby will now automatically kick other players out of that lobby.
- Imp priorities adjusted slightly.
- Imps now have their correct death effect in the Temple pool.
- Imps stats altered so that it's easier for them to reach level 10.
- Increased the health of MPD Hero Invasion Parties for higher levels.
- Increased the update rate of the full-screen map.
- Some Keeper Spells can now be cast into the Temple pool to contribute to Temple Recipes.
- Lobby chat text now more legible against the background.
- Made Horny immune to freezing.
- Made it easier to distinguish between separate sub-objectives.
- Made rewarded creature from Temple Recipe appear at average level of creatures dropped in pool.
- Magic Doors now only damaged by magic attacks.
- Mana from Prayer values tweaked for all creatures.
- More feedback when door is locked/unlocked.
- MPD quicksave no longer writes over Campaign quicksave.
- Multiplayer lobby now shows IP Address of all machines.
- Now easier to get around traps in 1st person.
- Pay-day timer now starts when first creature joins your side.
- Player names now shown instead of Player 1, Player 2 etc.



## Quake 3 engine dated already?

Though information is currently scarce, the Mortyr 2 Engine looks to be a stout contender to take some of the glory away from the Quake 3 Engine. The following shots from Warhammer 40,000: Agents Of Death show exceptional architecture, sparse outdoor environments and comprehensive in-game entities (such as the dragons you can see flying overhead). Although beautiful

compared to what's been seen in most of the Q3A development shots, Quake 3 has been developed with speed rather than graphics in mind, Carmack stating that at its heart, Quake 3 isn't an artistic statement, but a gameplay experience - powerful stuff in itself. The coming months will show the true power of the engine, as games such as American McGee's Alice and Star Trek: Voyager draw from the powerful features that can be included in a single player game.

## ESSENTIAL FILES

### ICQ

[www.icq.com](http://www.icq.com)

"I seek you" is a must have program if you plan to make your presence known on the net. This peripheral program notifies you when friends are online, and allows you to chat with them or transfer files. (Included on the CD).

## ESSENTIAL FILES

### Gamespy

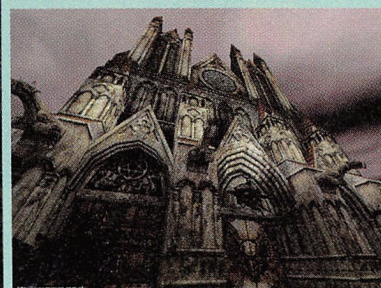
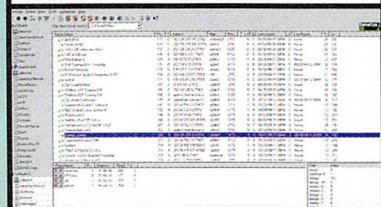
<http://www.gamespy.com/>

With over 4,000,000 users, Gamespy certainly has established itself as one of the most essential utilities in the online action business. Gamespy scans for internet servers, supporting games such as Quake, Quakeworld, Quake 2, Q3TEST, Kingpin, Sin, Half-Life, Hexen 2, Unreal, Shogo: MAD, Blood2, Baldur's Gate, Descent 3, Tribes and many others, listing them categorically, with individual servers arranged according to their "ping" value.

What this means is that you'll be finding the best possible server for your connection, all within a matter of minutes. Gamespy launches your game and connects to the desired server - with a simple double click, you'll be enjoying the best possible match for your connection.

Gamespy doesn't just support your standard games, embedded within the program (and presets are available for download from the net) are advanced filtering techniques which can negate specific servers on request, search and display servers running various game modifications and player searches, helping you to find that lost friend.

Gamespy is unlimited use shareware, though due to the regular updates and benefits registered users receive, the product is definitely a worthy purchase.





# PC PowerPlay HOT HARDWARE

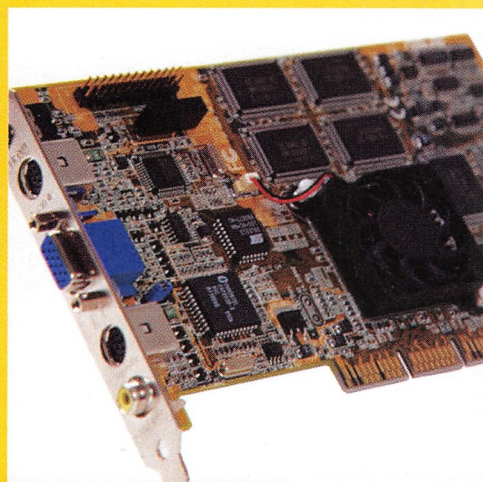
**You want THE BEST for your PC?**

Today's gaming PC is a lovingly crafted collection of state of the art technologies.

The PC PowerPlay HOT HARDWARE GUIDE is your source for all that's HOT in HARDWARE.

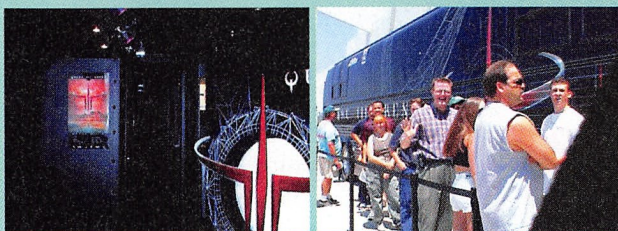
From our beginner's How To guides, through to enthusiast advice for pushing your PC to the limit, the Hot Hardware Guide is your annual bible for PC know-how.

## Out in October.





# NGN Action News



Queue for hours to play a game that isn't finished yet - you betcha!

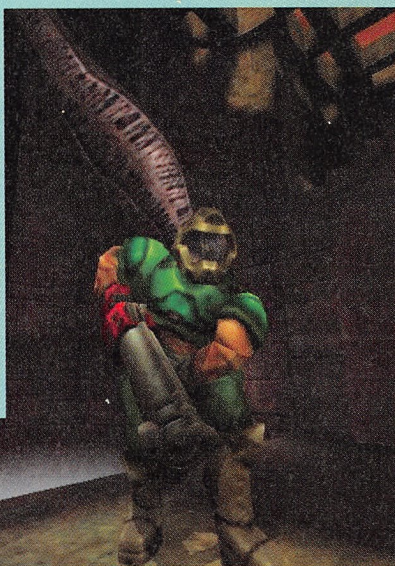
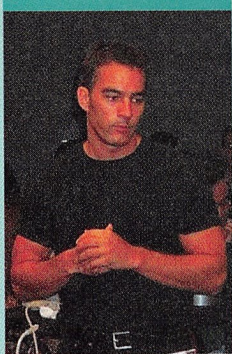
## PATCH NEWS

- Players are now informed of players that have dropped out of a MP game.
- Removed cheats in MP.
- Rooms, doors and traps cannot be set to researchable in MP game options.
- The F3 camera option is not as zoomed in.
- When trying to join a game in Internet Dungeon Watch you now also get a message.
- Winner's name now at the top of a MP debriefing.
- You can now assign ESC key in game and Front End.

## Driving Miss Daisy?

The Quake 3 Arena Road Tour has kicked off from the closing of Quakecon, and is enjoying mammoth (though expected) success across the states of America. The coach is loaded with networked AMD Athlon computers, and selected participants are allowed to enter the bus to sit down and play-test Q3A first hand. Still recovering from three days of straight gaming, id employees such as Katherine Anna Kang and Paul Steed, provide the "corporate image," while inside the black metal gasket it's about gaming up through the states. We can just see Paul pulling up at the lights, sticking his head out and shouting "jump in girls!"

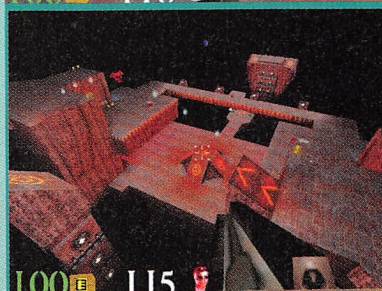
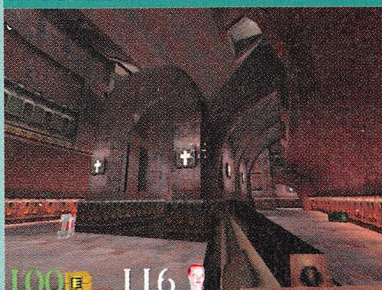
Paul Steed: he's a dude.



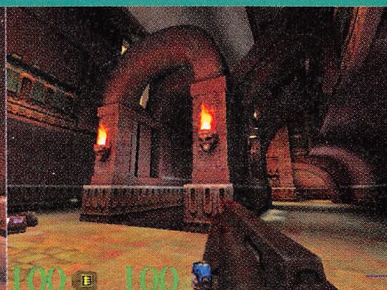
## I SEE THOSE CHANGES

Quake3:Arena is moving along with the guidelines of "whatever's cool goes in," so the transitions shown between each test phase and, eventually, the final version is likely to differ greatly from what's currently available. As the product is polished and refined towards beta stages, we're likely to see changes not only to the networking and in-game physics, but also to the visual structure of the game: the textures, skins, weapons models, level layout and software design. Testament to this, are some shots released by Dennis "Thresh" Fong that show some of the maps that were play tested just a few months before the first Q3TEST release - look familiar, don't they?

### IN DEVELOPMENT



### TEST VERSION



## Tribes Game-Raiders

With the recent revival of the software piracy debate, Dynamix have announced that an estimated seven out of eight copies of Starsiege: Tribes are stolen. Though this sort of mass-scale theft will be difficult to rectify, Dynamix plan to implement a more comprehensive protection system for Tribes 2.

On a more positive note however, and in a sudden and unexpected move by its developers, the Xtreme map pack for Starsiege Tribes which was originally scheduled for inclusion with Tribes

Extreme, has been released to the public, free of charge. The add-on contains six new maps, all of which contain new buildings, textures and environmental terrain.

## Anti-Alias

During his conference at QuakeCON, John Carmack, lead developer for id software told audiences that the "alias" command for Quake 3 Arena will not be implemented for the shelf-release of Quake 3 Arena, explaining that he has "difficulty feeling too much sympathy for the people who build the really complex aliases," and that he was of the opinion that "many people consider it cheating."

The alias command has been around since the days of Quake, and is an easy way to create complex operations such as zooming and rocket jumping by stringing together multiple commands. While it can be argued either way, Carmack has expressed his final opinions on the matter. Aliasing is out.

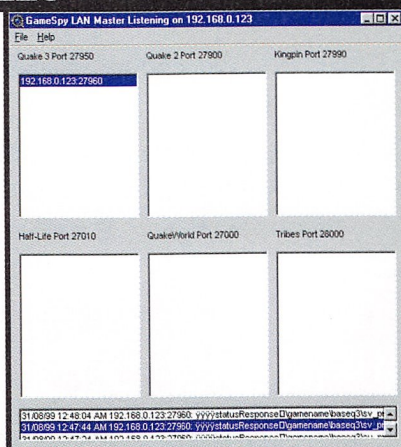
## ESSENTIAL FILES

### LanMaster

<http://www.lanparty.com/lanmaster/>

On a supporting note, LAN Master is a side project developed by David "crt" Wright. Being server-searching software (like Gamespy), LAN Master's intended search uses are for LAN-play. This program is extremely useful, even for small network games that may only be running two to three different games.

It works by monitoring the network for data transfer and lists the IP addresses for each server that may be running Quakeworld, Quake2, Q3TEST, Half Life, Kingpin or Tribes. These servers are simulcast on-screen, allowing you to check out what games are available across the network (this is particularly useful for large LAN parties of 30 or more persons), without having to load each game individually and search using their interior engine - giving you more time to game to your hearts content.



## Support For The Second-Coming

Unreal Tournament is looking set to surpass its predecessor in the multiplayer arena, but there's no reason



## ESSENTIAL FILES

### mIRC

[www.mirc.co.uk](http://www.mirc.co.uk)

A comprehensive Internet Relay Chat program. Once a channel is joined, you can converse with others and transfer files to them as well.

to archive your copy of the classic Unreal just yet. Mark Rein from Epic MegaGames has stated that the original Unreal deathmatch maps will be playable through Unreal Tournament - provided that you have the necessary texture sets from the original. Classic maps like DMTundra will allow for some old school multiplayer spiced up by the new physics and strategic elements resident in Tournament.

### Zoom Shut

Steven Polge, one of the lead programmers for both Unreal and UT has announced that while zooming on the sniper rifle will be allowed, the minimum field of view (FOV) in Unreal Tournament will be 80%.

"In UT, you can set your FOV to

Here we see a UT character model sporting a Bruce Willis-style vertical head. Cool!

any value greater than or equal to 80 - which covers the range of reasonable you might want to play in, but doesn't allow zooming cheats," said Steven Polge.

In the same letter, he boasted about the "awesome air control in UT," which will be customisable through the in-game menus. We are however, unsure exactly how to interpret "awesome."



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## THE CHASER

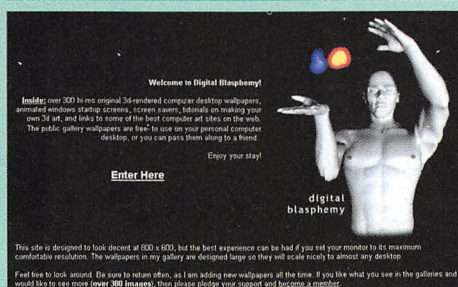
News is not always exciting, but completely necessary if you're planning to keep up with civilisation. Internet based news makes it much easier as you really don't have a good excuse to leave your computer. Even so, it can be a little dull (no Sully!). Welcome to the Chaser, news for when ordinary news just won't cut it. While most of what they put up is completely fictitious it is almost always amusing and you even get to keep in touch with real issues, even if they are on quite a slant.

Shafted are a Victorian LAN group who run similar parties as shown in earlier Webstalks, except of course that they're in Victoria. They have one-day LAN parties similar to MPU in Sydney and play a variety of games from Quake to Jana's Dildo challenge (ahem). If you're interested you had better sign up quickly as it seems the events fill up in a very short time, they have about 150 players on their books too so competition will be strong. There are some great prizes to be won too!

Windows looking a bit drab? This site contains over 300 3D rendered backgrounds, start up screens, screen savers and tutorials on how to do it all yourself. The best part is that almost all of them look absolutely fantastic, so good in fact that you won't even want to play games any more because you won't be able to see your desktop. They are of course free so get yours now. Your desktop will never look better. *Sent by Quantum Eclipse.*

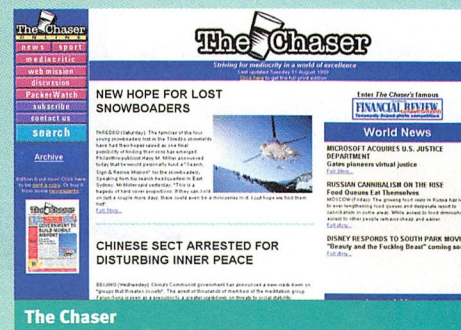


**Wallpaper from Digital Blasphemy (below)**

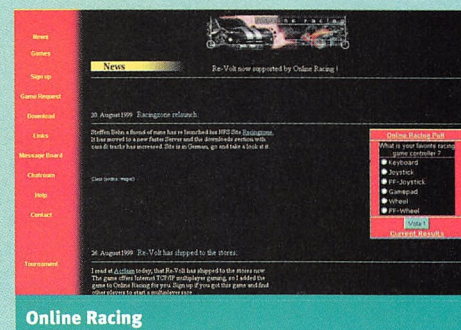


Sharky Extreme is another hardware site to give you all the latest news on what's going on in the chips and bits department. As well as detailing all the latest and greatest new they also delve into the black art of overclocking and many other feature articles. There are also a number of interviews available from highly respected tech boffins. Sharky uses down to earth language too, so if you're interested in an upgrade but don't understand the mumbo jumbo then Sharky would be a good place to start. Sent by *Stan Kos*.

While some of the more prominent games have their own master servers with thousands of players online at once, some genres, especially racing, don't seem to enjoy the same luxury. Because of this finding some players to duel against can be quite a difficult task. Online racing though comes to the rescue with support for games such as Grand Prix legends, Toca 1 and 2, Need For Speed 3 and 4 as well as many, many others. They also have quite a bit of racing game news which is handy for people who don't want to wander around the web looking for what they're interested in. Sent in by the Skinner Family.



## The Chaser



## Online Racing



## Sharkvextreme



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**hyperactive** 3.0  
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> [HTTP://HYPERACTIVE.COM](http://HYPERACTIVE.COM) <



PLAYSTATION



MAC



PC-CDROM



CHAT



SEGA



ARCADE



NINTENDO 64



# LETTERS

Write to PC PowerPlay  
LETTERS  
Level 6,  
418A Elizabeth St  
Surry Hills, NSW 2010

Letters Page Tip #2: The PCPP Letters page is a forum for serious, high-minded debate. As such, all correspondence that spells words with a "z" instead of an "s" will be treated with merciless derision.

## Totally Sex Driven

I'm going to get straight to the point. Why can't there be any games that are totally sex driven. Don't worry about action or a plot, just walk around with your character and swindle all the chicks back to your house for one slapping session. Something like Leisure Suit Larry, but much more involving. What do you guys think? And, by the way, even though I drank petrol as a child (I thought it was portello), I did not suffer any brain damage whatsoever!

**SNATCH, Email**

*Or perhaps the brain damage was so great that you haven't yet realised its full effects.*



Baldur's Gate: Orcs and wizards - yawn.

## I Got For Free

I noticed the past couple of months new contributors are contributing (*Hence the title "contributor", I guess - Ed*). I was wondering why this is? What happened to people like Pete Sharpe, George Argy, Gareth Jones (he left to become editor of PC Gameguide, didn't he?) and Hendry Saunders? Were these people kicked out and replaced with Ed Dawson, Brett Robinson, John Dewhurst and others? Or were these people always at the PC PowerPlay office and just glided into the top jobs?

One other thing I have to complain about is why David only gave Baldur's Gate 87% when it clearly deserves at least 200%! Grrrrrr. Could you recommend some good RPGs to me because I love them and want to buy some more. The ones I already have are: Baldur's Gate, Fallout 2, Ultima VI, Betrayal At Krondor, Menzoberazzen, and an old game I got for free off the net called Ancients.

**Brad, Email**

*Yes, Gareth left to edit the GameGuides, as you say. As for the others: Pete left to found a new age, puritan colony on the Ivory Coast; George jacked into the matrix and hasn't been seen since, departing only with the words "I'm just stepping inside, I may be some time"; and, after a brief spell undercover with us, Hendry has resumed his career in international espionage.*

Ultima Ascension: Explore every inch of it later this year.



## JOLT COLA Letter of the Month

A case of the good stuff for the letter that says it best

## Sitting On My Monitor

Games Piracy and the Hardcore Gamer - a match made in heaven, right? Maybe for most, but I have found the true way. To fully appreciate the miracle that is the modern game, I have found that I need to do several things. The first one is too restrict myself to buying the originals of the games. I don't think there is anything better than the shiny box and the smell of the fresh manual as you peel back that shrink-wrap. The second, which is really a spin off of the price of buying the originals, is that I spend and invest so much more time and effort into getting the full potential out of my purchase. I now explore absolutely every inch of the game world, no matter how big a red herring it is. It is just fun to take your time. This stems from not having a mountain of burnt discs sitting on my monitor waiting to be played. I think that a true gamer spends the time to get to know every inch of his virtual environment and takes the time to appreciate the work that has gone into this amazing new experience. It is an art to play the game, not a race.

**Damien Webber, Email**

*We agree with Damien.*

*David awarded Baldur's Gate 87% because, although he enjoyed it (especially the combat engine) and recognised the game's role in reviving the flagging RPG genre, it was still a derivative and overly-simplistic title. Look no further than System Shock 2 for your next role-playing purchase.*

## Reading When I Came

It was a Saturday afternoon when I brought home your magazine and I decided to read some of the letters. I was busily reading when I came across a very disturbing accusation ("Easy Violence" #40). The writer was talking about the amount of violence in games. Sure we have a fair

bit, but why not, it's great. The thing that pissed me off greatly was the fact that he claimed First Person "SHOOTERS" and "WAR" Sims had violence in them. What are they supposed to have in them, 'fairyies'. I think not. The whole purpose of war is to blow stuff up, shoot people with large guns, and drive over them in tanks. And why do

## Byte Size

I'm not just some freak out there that thinks I could single handedly take over the world, no...I have proof!

**Eden Zhang, Abrev NSW**

*Well, appearing in PCPP is a start, we suppose.*





Screenshots by Colin Verne

you think they call them "First Person Shooters". I rest my 'case'.

#### Scott Johnson, Email

People aren't surprised by the violence in certain games. What they find concerning is the depressing realisation that so many new titles concentrate too heavily on that single aspect ("Hey, you can make his head explode if you shoot his neck! Heh heh!") at the expense of any kind of interesting gameplay element. Once you get over the novelty value of location damage, for example, it remains a worthwhile game feature only if it has a tangible effect on the way you play. Does shooting someone in the leg actually impede their movement or does it merely result in a briefly amusing animation?

## Damn It Was Funny

Everyone knows that the new buzzword that producers and developers of games are using is "Advanced AI". But is "Advanced AI" really the answer to complete gaming Nirvana?

Well, most of the time it is, the added challenge increases playability, makes you grit your teeth before every encounter, and makes victory oh-so sweeter. But something is lacking, something I feel is essential to gaming, something not so much challenging as fun. That something is Idiots!

Yes Idiots, characters or entities that do really stupid things, make huge mistakes, or just fail to take notice (often at the price of their own mortality). They aren't a challenge, they just make you laugh. I played Sin bugs and all, and

yes, it is a good example of bad AI, but damn it was funny! And who could help but snicker while playing Doom, when an Imp caught in friendly fire turns around to wreak its revenge on the Marine behind it.

I'm all for an opponent that can read my moves and out-manoeuvre anything I care to throw at it. But odds are in every 50 marines there must be one that isn't all there, whose irrational behaviour and lack of skill make it the ideal practice target and comic relief. In my opinion the perfect game should consist of 90% "Advanced AI" and 10% Idiots.

Bring back the fun, bring back the entertainment, bring on the Idiots!

#### Clinton Shepherd, Email

P.S. And on a different note, wasn't the first game to have location damage MechWarrior 2? But please correct me if I'm wrong. The important thing to remember with Advanced AI is that it's not how tough, but rather how convincing. Anyone can program an AI that kicks your arse. It's far more impressive when acts in a plausible, consistent, and - yes - challenging way. Besting an AI shouldn't be about learning tricks and exploiting loopholes, instead it should be about reacting on the spot and matching wits. The first game to have location damage was... Aargh! We don't know, it's all too long ago. Ben says it was Microprose's Formula One Grand Prix, March reckons Goldeneye was the first to do it properly, David suggests ancient brick 'n' bat game Breakout, while Street Fighter gets Malcolm's nomination - so what do we know?

## Too Much Caffeine

I don't know whom the guy is who names the Microsoft games, but they gotta get themselves a new guy. I can just see him at the office planning the name. "Heheh, yeah, let's make it groovy and funky, so it will appeal to all the Gen Xers. Let's call it <insert game name here> MADNESS. Heheh, yeah, that will be neat." First there's Monster Truck MADNESS, then Monster Truck MADNESS 2, then Motocross MADNESS and now Midtown MADNESS. Either some idiot

## Unreal Tournament review

I just wanted to express a little disappointment about the Unreal Tournament review you did in your August edition. I read that review in early July, which means it must have been written in June sometime, which means the review period probably began in late May. You probably know where I'm headed.

I think you guys express fantastic interest in the gaming community, and it is obvious that you are gamers first and journos second. And I'm guessing that you're pretty red-faced about the whole thing anyway, so this mail is probably redundant. Let me just say that you guys are producing quality journalism consistently (a hallmark of PCPP).

I'm a huge fan of Sweeney and his crew, and the heap of work that Epic has put into the game. Your review strikes me as a financially underproductive exercise for the sake of having the most feature-complete, extensible game anyone has undertaken.

Joseph Pearson, Email

Here's what happened:

Immediately after E3, in late May this year, I went to Epic's office in North Carolina by invitation, together with a representative from GT Interactive. Epic's VP and well known UT evangelist Mark Rein spent the day showing me through UT, and I was fortunate enough to spend time with various members of the UT team, including a massive deathmatch session. Top day. While I was there, Mark Rein stated that the game was finished - with the ONLY remaining work being an improvement on D3D graphics speed. Other than this, UT, Rein stated, was complete, with absolutely all gameplay elements done and no visual differences to the graphics as a result of the D3D optimisations. He offered me a copy to review for PCPP. I spent some time seeking absolute assurances that UT would be on sale by the time our August issue hit the streets, an assurance which Mark Rein provided with clear confidence, stating at the time that he expected UT to "go gold" within 3 weeks, after the D3D improvements were implemented (this was late May 99). Seeing as the review machine we would use for UT would be 3dfx-based, the D3D optimisations were irrelevant, and, as per Rein's promise that I had in my hand what was effectively the finished game, I returned with the CD and we proceeded with the review.

Needless to say, the game is still not released. The team continue to add cool new features, which is only a good thing. However, we are naturally not too pleased about the end result - and neither are you, we're sure. Among the issues this causes is that our review is no longer accurate, as the final game will contain many features absent from the version we reviewed. For this reason we're pulling UT from The List, as the score is no longer relevant. I apologise to any reader that tried to buy this game based on our "available now" statement. Ben



Unreal Tournament: It'll be out in 2 weeks. Hohoho.

## Byte Size

I would just like to say that your magazine is great, but some of the letters are really dumb. Like one I read one day about female gamers being a waste of time. I think that people shouldn't really care, they should just concentrate on their own games and gaming ability. They might even be better than some male gamers.

#### Demonman, Email

Who said chivalry was dead?





The only Dreamcast games you'll ever see in PCPP. (from left to right) Trickstyle, Dead or Alive 2, and Shenmue. (below) Sophitia, from Soul Caliber (see the subscription page)

drinks too much caffeine and has a crazy obsession with the word MADNESS or it's some scheme of Microsoft's to get the letter M firmly burnt into our minds. Who knows what's next in the amazing range of MADNESS games?

**Ben Martin, Email**

How about Minesweeper Madness? Mud Wrestling Madness? Masturbation Madness? On second thoughts, maybe not.

## Glued My Eyelids

Allow me to introduce myself - I'm a member of that rare species - the female gamer. I've been playing since I first clapped eyes on the C64 (anyone remember Ghosts and Goblins?) in Year 7. I've thrashed away at Half-Life until four in the morning, I've glued my eyelids open at numerous LAN Parties and squished innocent pedestrians in GTA to my heart's content. I'm highly insulted that Selvo (PCPP #40) considers that all I might be interested in is Barbie. Although I did find Riding Star strangely compelling...

**Katherine Keynes, Email**

Riding Star is alright, but we feel that Detective Barbie is the more complete game.

## From The Top Down

Just dropping a letter to say what the hell is happening with RTS games. I for one am pleased that TA Kingdoms is still in isometric view, as this is the only way to play RTS games. As I understand it Tiberian Sun will be this way also (if it ever gets here). Dark Reign 2 is off of my list, as it needs 3D support and will nearly be in 1st person mode. How can you play like this? Warzone 2100 is bad enough. RTS should be

played like the timeless old game chess, from the top down. They used to be great and still not need 3D hardware support.

**Darren, Email**

Strategy games are still experimenting with 3D engines. The ones that meet with success will be, we believe, those that don't simply ape the traditional 2D RTS gameplay. Check out Homeworld for a glimpse of the future.

## Peeled Off The Cling Wrap

WTF is up with Cavedog. Just a couple of weeks ago I purchased a copy of TA: Kingdoms and, being the multiplayer lover that I am, couldn't wait for the networking weekend with a few friends. To my surprise, as I peeled off the cling wrap and poured out the contents, I found that to play it against friends everyone needed a copy. Now as we all know, Total Annihilation was packaged with two discs - one for single player and one for the much-loved multiplayer. Why, oh why, Cavedog, didn't you do the same with TA: Kingdoms.

**Frank Fong, Ipswich, QLD**

It's disappointing, to say the least. Which probably sums up the general reaction to the game as a whole.

## Gorgeous Effects

I'm currently getting very worried about the new challenger in the consoles vs PC debate, the Dreamcast. Surely the main aspects the PC has

over other consoles would be the net, a decent OS, installations and document programs (Love those installations! - Ed). So what will happen when the new Dreamcast (which has all these functions) is released in the next few months? The Dreamcast even has some better features. Go to Hyperactive and check out Dead or Alive 2's graphics and you will see what I mean.

These kind of rounded, smoothed, in game graphics put even Quake 3's gorgeous effects to shame. Compare Trickstyle's graphics on the Dreamcast to the screenshots that were recently shown in PC PowerPlay (#39) and notice how the models are a lot smoother and look more realistic. Now don't get me wrong, I love my PC and wouldn't trade it for any console no matter what. But with many PC games and functions being ported over, whilst so many of the console games are kept within the "console only zone", plus the added problem of the price comparison which doesn't even get close to the price of upgrading now days. Doesn't it just give the PC a run for its money?

**Phoenix, Email**

Our advice is to let the PC and console makers and publishers worry about such competition. As a gamer and consumer, you're about to be spoiled for choice - so why complain?

## Rest Of The Crew

PCPP is getting a bit hypocritical in its views. How about we start with Star Trek? Now I'm not



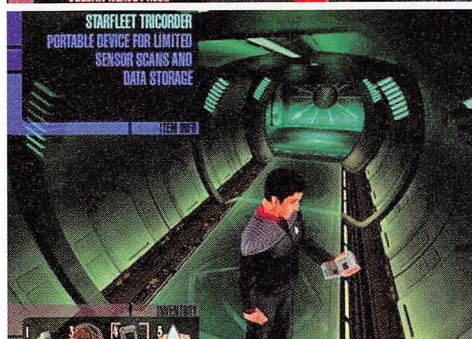
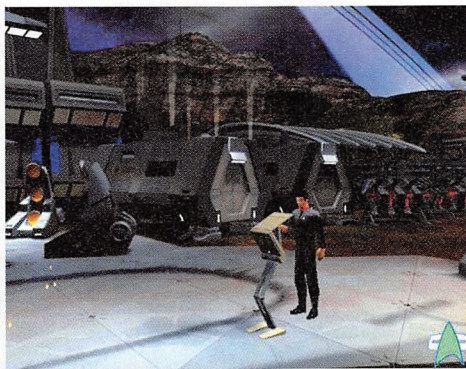
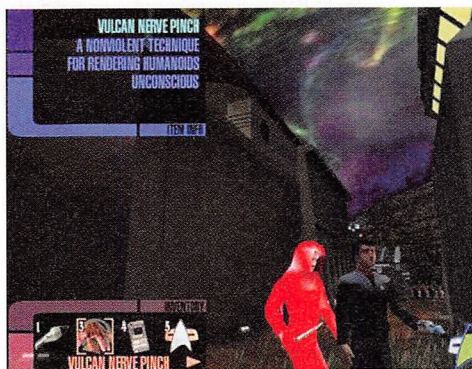
## Byte Size

I just received an email from my aunt, who was a ground-breaker in our family when it came to computers. Alas I find she has lapsed backwards.

**John Jarvis, Email**

Anyone else have an aunt/computer story to tell?





Star Trek - Hidden Evil: we love Star Trek. Especially Jadzia Dax.

a great fan of political correctness, but a statement like "True Trekkies will love this lots. Pity them" (which was written under the title (It's called a "standfirst" - Ed) for the Star Trek Starship Creator in Diversions #36) is just a wee bit over the top. This month it's the PCPP crew "unanimously feel that all things Star Trek suck", though David Wildgoose made it apparent in the aforementioned review that he had watched and indeed enjoyed - at least the first three series of Star Trek, if not Voyager, personally my least favourite also. And yet he also thought that they sucked? Whoever wrote that comment please ask the rest of the crew before making up their minds for them, OK? Because all things Star Trek suck I am surprised to see that, despite this great prejudice against the Star Trek Universe, the games have got reviews ranging from 64% to 92%.

#### WAZA, Email

*But it's just so easy to take the piss out of Star Trek. We were possibly a little harsh in saying they all suck, but the Starship Creator thoroughly deserved everything it got.*

### Fit On Half A Floppy

I have a simple message to the gamers of Australia, especially our younger ones. Most of the best games ever made were not fast paced action packed blood fests with immeasurable amounts of eye candy. They were the simple games that had no Lara Croft-esque sales gimmicks, or even a marketing

budget. They were made by one man on his home computer writing a game that had no chance of engaging your eyes with more than 16 colours, but did have a chance to engage your minds. The modern gamer is spoilt rotten with brilliant graphics, but does it make them more fun? No. Games like Incoming and Turok 2 proved that. Quake 2 was hailed as the greatest game ever, but I completed the single player element in a week, and was left feeling as if I had wasted my time. But games like Ultima IV that could fit on half a floppy disk engaged us for weeks, even months on end. I first played it in 1990 and I am still playing it to this day (You must be tired - Predictable Joke, Ed). You had nothing handed to you on a platter. It was just you and your wits in a game world larger than just about any other game I have played to this day. If you honestly think games like Diablo or Zelda on the N64 are RPGs, then go and try a real one. Ultima 4 has been made freeware by Origin, so go out and download it and try it. It won't please anyone in the graphics department, but it doesn't need them to still be one of the best games ever. Go and try gaming at its roots.

#### Paul Elphinstone, Email

*Your mention of Ultima IV brought a tear to my eye, Paul. But, honestly, after experiencing the magnificence of System Shock 2, no other RPG could possibly seem adequate.*



Even after re-spawning, few recovered from the mental scars left by the CASTR8TORR's railgun...

### Byte Size

Quake introduced a whole new world of "3d gaming" and has brought many hours of internet gibbiness to not only myself but to the other hundreds of people who log on daily for a dose of fragging the shit out of someone.

#### BloodSheD

*Indeed, Quake does unite the world.*

### Overheads Are Static

I feel the time has come for some facts to come into this discussion about games, their perceived high cost and piracy. Your encouragement to write John Howard about the price difference between Australia and Singapore may be giving the wrong impression. Australia has the huge sales tax rate of 0.41% on software. This will change now that the GST bill has been passed, so buy all your software before next July.

It's the retailer/wholesale/distributor chain that makes the profit and drives the prices. It's much more profitable to sell half the copies for twice the price. In fact it's usually more profitable to sell a third of the copies for the same total income. That's because volume can only drive the price down if overheads are static.

So why is OS cheaper? Competition, in retail and in distribution. The only way to force a change is to buy from overseas, this will force those few Australian software distributors to compete by lowering prices. Better yet, when you can, buy direct from the software producer.

#### Gavin Scarman, Email

P.S. I'll bet you guys won't publish this cos most of your advertising is from the distributors who have got us all by the short and curlies and have been yanking them hard for years. BTW, what happened to the DirectX programming articles?

*DirectX articles? We fell asleep sub-editing them. Hope that helps!*

### Best Friends' Testicle

In reply to the letter "Point & Shoot", submitted by one "James Gould", I and my much learned friend can only pity this sad poor dejected little fellow. Was he not hugged as a child? Gameplay such as the one he was describing is the epitome of modern gaming. Games have been moving towards hit location damage, but when are they going to implement the ability to shoot off individual testicles? I mean really, that is what the railgun was designed for. My idea of the perfect game would involve standing in a dark corridor, brandishing a rather large rocket launcher, shooting at individual testicles of endless hordes of enemies (i.e. friends). What could be funnier than shooting off your best friends' testicle at a range of 200m using a railgun at the same time as the announcer shouts "Oh, and he has lost another one".

#### GiMo, Email

*We should probably leave GiMo and his "much learned" friend alone to continue with their testicle-shooting antics...*

### Byte Size

All I'm saying is, if you choose to pirate games, don't try and take the moral high ground. Realise that you are an immoral, criminal, thieving bastard and get on with your life.

#### Yaniv Bernstein, Email

*Yeah, being hung, drawn and quartered is too good for them.*



# COMPETITIONS

## TIBERIAN SUN

**GRAND PRIZE: TIBERIAN SUN PRIZE PACK.  
9 RUNNERS UP: A COPY OF THE GAME**

After all the wait, Tiberian Sun is finally here. And you'd be wanting a free copy then, eh?

How's this for a behemoth of a prize pack then.

One lucky bastard will get:

- **A Tiberian Sun poster** (featuring the cover box art) **signed by the development team!** We twisted each and every arm till they finally agreed to autograph the thing. But that's not all - this poster is mounted and framed in nothing but the finest local glass - so that your grubby little mitts don't start knocking dollar value off this incredible piece of gaming paraphernalia! One word: cool.
- **A snazzy Tiberian Sun t-shirt.** Wear it to school, wear it to bed. Either way, you'll feel in complete control, ready to command and conquer...
- **An official Tiberian Sun mouse mat.** Give yourself that undeniable edge in multiplayer.
- **Tiberian Sun sunglasses!** These chic retina-

protectors sport the Tiberian Sun logo on the frame and are a must have if you plan to turn heads this summer.

- **A set of two pins featuring the GDI and NOD logos.** That's right! Where them with pride or stick 'em on the display cabinet.

- **1 x Command & Conquer.** See where it all began!

- **1 x Command & Conquer: Red**



**Alert.** Big cuddly Ruskies, hammy accents - Red Alert was just cool.

- **1 x Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun.** What kind of a Tiberian Sun prize pack could this be without a copy of the game itself?

9 lucky runners-up will each receive a **copy of Tiberian Sun.**

Yeah, we know... This is one of the coolest prize packs ever. You're wondering why we don't keep all these goodies for ourselves. It's 'cause we love youse all, and like to share. But hey, don't thank us - thank the effervescent Sandy at EA Australia for making this entire Tiberian Sun explosion possible.

**Q. Before James Earl Jones became a well known actor, and brought Darth Vader to life with his powerfully distinct voice, what condition did he suffer from?**

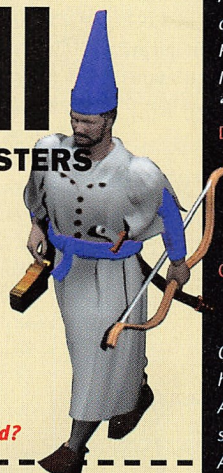
## AGE OF EMPIRES II

**10 COPIES OF THE GAME PLUS EXCLUSIVE SIGNED POSTERS**

Prefer your RTS with more of a historic flavour? You can't go past Age of Empires 2: The Age of Kings. The good news is, Bruce Shelley has made this style of game better than ever. With an even greater attention to detail, stunning graphics (soooooo darn pretty!) and a slew of minor gameplay enhancements, AoE2 will make you a slave to fine real-time strategy gaming all over again. Little bloke management has never been this much fun!

We've got ten copies of AoE2 to give away - each coming with an exclusive AoE2 poster signed by none other than the creator of the game, Bruce Shelley himself! Special thanks goes to Melinda at Microsoft for making this happen.

**Q. What is a female elephant called?**



## SYSTEM SHOCK 2

**6 COPIES OF THE GAME**

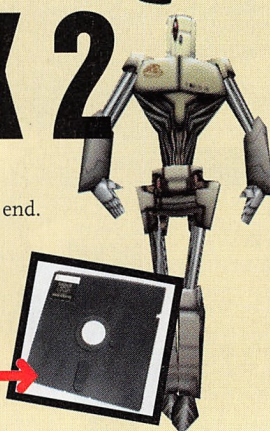
This Cyberpunk RPG is a truly terrifying gaming experience. This sequel has everything fans of the first could have hoped for - more items, greater interaction, and of course, SHODAN. Using an enhanced version of Thief: The Dark Project's Dark Engine, role-playing gaming never looked so good.

Part first person shooter, part adventure game, System Shock 2 will have you sucked into its tale of man

versus machine to the very end.

EA Australia have kindly given us 6 copies of System Shock 2 to pass on to you.

**Q. Just what exactly is this odd-looking object?**



### WHERE TO SEND

Write the answer, along with your name and address on the back of an envelope. Tip: Don't forget to put the competition name on the front of the envelope.

All entries close October 12th.

Send to:

<competition name>

PC PowerPlay

78 Renwick St Redfern NSW 2016

### ISSUE 40 WINNERS

#### MIKE STEWART'S PRO BODYBOARDING

**Q. What is the name of the Hawaiian nobleman that allegedly invented surfing?**

A.. Duke Kahanamoku

H. Cotton, Caringbah NSW

B. Dykes, Jamberoo NSW

B. Watkins, Dromana VIC

P. Taylor, West Hobart TAS

C. Maxwell, Lara VIC

D. Evans, Glasshouse Mountains QLD

#### TOTAL ANNIHILATION: KINGDOMS

**Q. Who played Genghis Khan in 'Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure'?**

A. Albert (Al) Leong

M. Martis, Nhulunbuy NT

A. Claridge, Burpengary QLD

V. Rohrlach, Nuriootpa SA

K. Comber, Fortitude Valley QLD

R. Morris, Collingwood Park QLD

O. Lucas, Perth WA

#### HEAVY GEAR 2

**Q. Which American President initiated the 'Star Wars' defence program?**

A.. On 22 March 1983, the 40th President of the United States, Ronald Wilson Reagan, initiated the Strategic Defence Initiative, commonly referred to as the 'Star Wars' program.

D. Easterbrook, Regents Park QLD

J. Blackman, Ingle Farm SA

D. Ryan, Toongabbie NSW

V. Tran, Pasadena SA

B. Schilling, Singleton Heights NSW

C. Muntz, Pimpama QLD

#### SHADOWMAN

**Q. In what country does 'Voodoo Magic' have its origins, and is still practiced?**

A. Haiti in the West Indies (although some say it was introduced to Haiti by African slaves and therefore it's origins are in Africa).

C. Desborough, Blacktown NSW

T. Britt, Black Hill VIC

S. Meyers, Runcorn QLD

G. Watts, Southern Cross WA

V. Chandra, Lautoka, Fiji

D. Cooke, Whangarei NZ



A 3D rendered image of the character Lara Croft from the Tomb Raider series. She is sitting on a white surface, wearing a white strapless dress and a black bikini bottom. Her hair is dark and styled in a long braid. She is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression.

**I'm back....**

**REVIEWED!**

**TOMB RAIDER**  
**THE LAST REVELATION**

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**COMING**  
**IN PC PowerPlay**

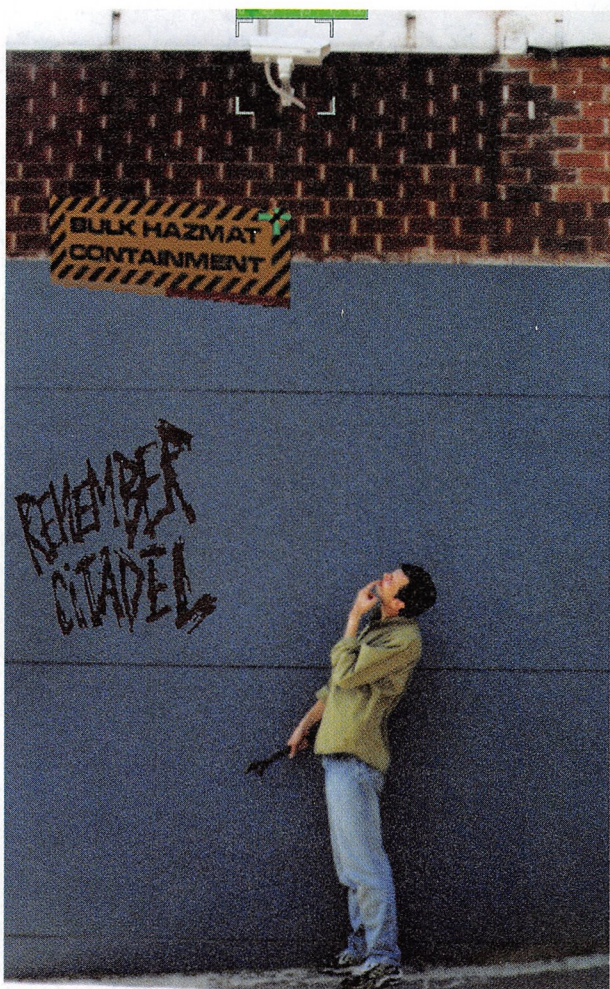
**PLUS: TIBERIAN SUN PLAYGUIDE, WARCRAFT III, DIABLO II, THE SIMS**  
**REVIEWS: ROGUE SPEAR, DRIVER, DRAKAN, PRINCE OF PERSIA 3D, GP500, GABRIEL KNIGHT 3, STARFLEET COMMAND**



# IF GAMES WERE REAL

## PART 1: SYSTEM SHOCK 2

After playing System Shock 2, somehow the world will never look quite the same again....



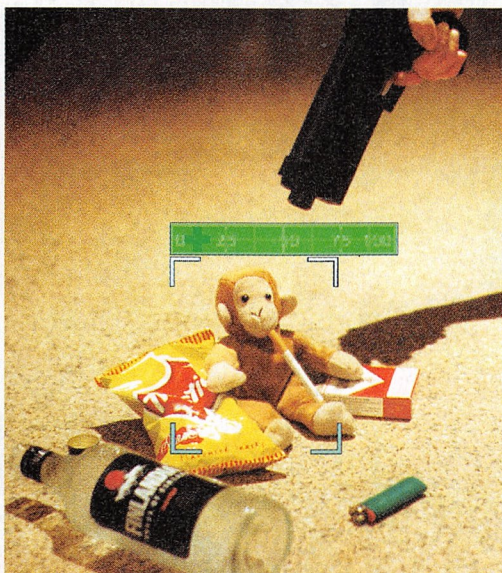
Curse those security cameras! Ben can jump puddles - but he can't jump that bloody high!



David tried to hack this parking meter, forgetting that he doesn't have a car.



March leapt into traffic, attempting to subdue this maintenance bot with his cyro-kinesis PSI power.



Malcolm's battles against the monkeys taught him one thing: 9 times out of 10 they carried chips. Mmmm chips...



The Next Gaming network hub - no wonder it's always crashing!

Photos by Peter Campbell



**DIAMOND**

MEMORY  
**32MB**

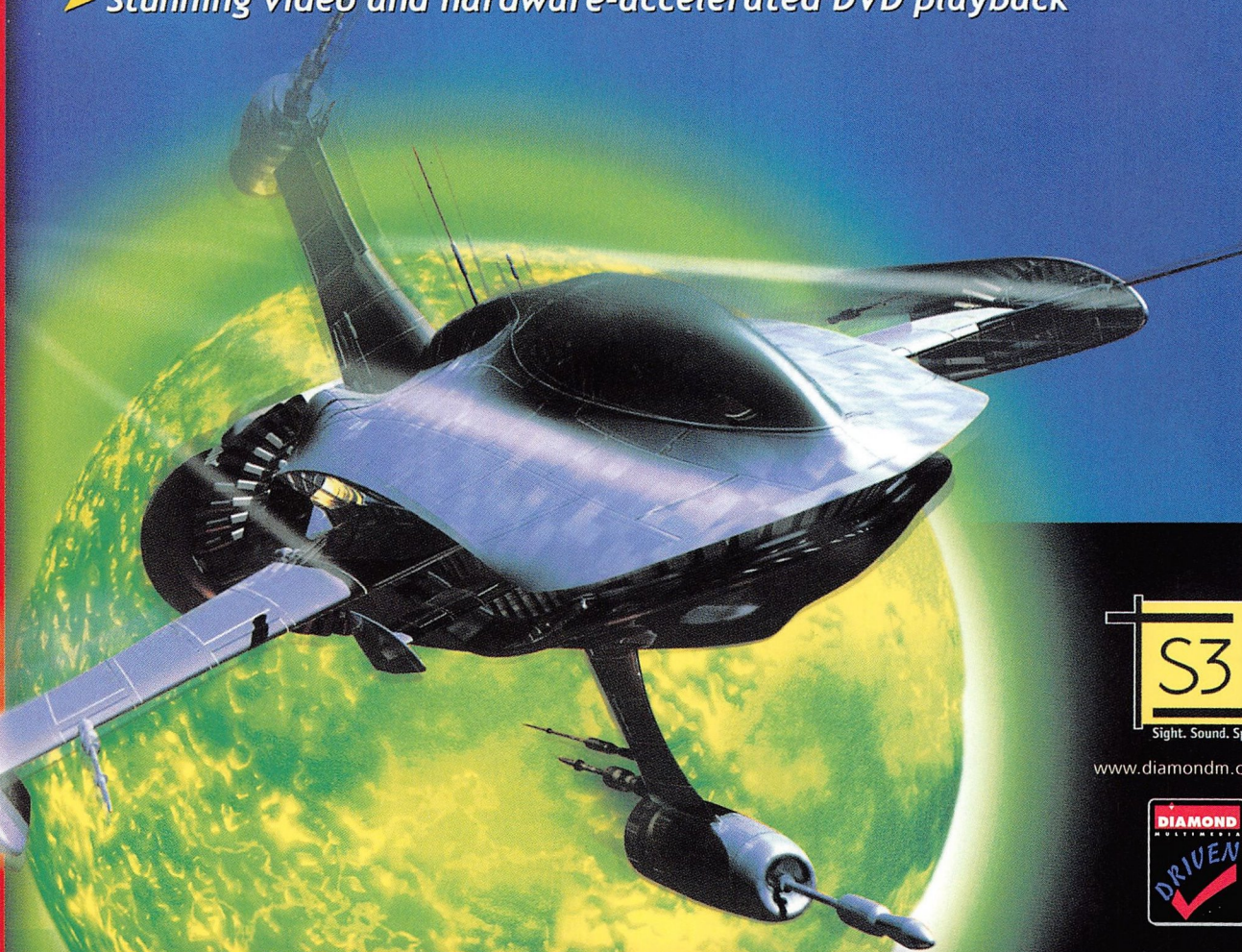
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**Harvey Norman**

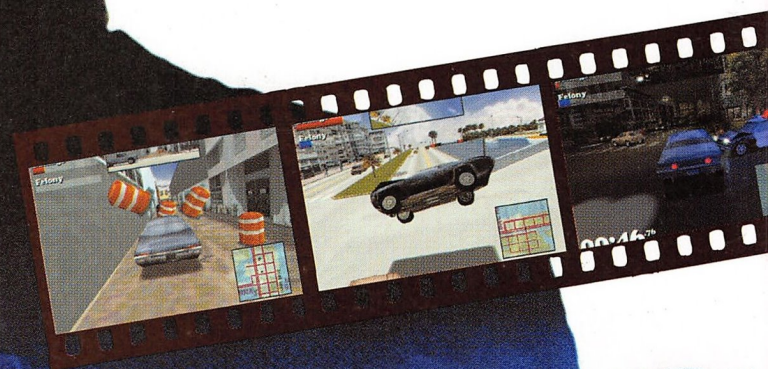
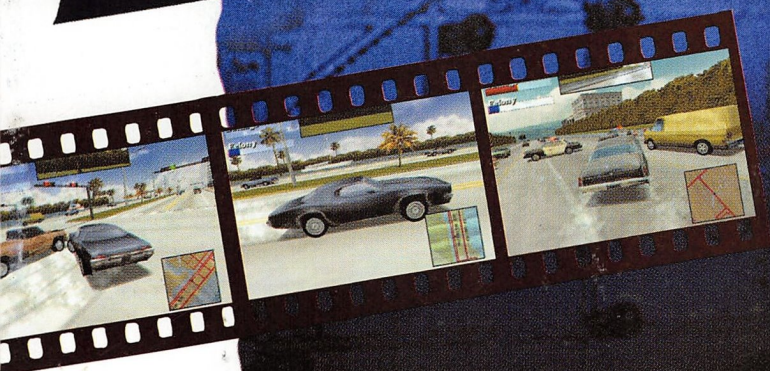
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